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THE ROAD IN TUSCANY

THE

ROAD IN TUSCANY

A COMMENTARY

56664

BY

MAURICE HEWLETT

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOSEPH PENNELL

I' mi son un che, quando
Amor mi spira, noto, ed a quel modo
Che dêtta dentro, vo significando.
24 Purg. 52.

2x:1-13

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ADVERTISEMENT

For the chapter on Siena I have made use of an article of mine which appeared in the *Quarterly Review* for July 1903. Parts of many other chapters have been printed in the *Speaker*, and that on Volterra in the *Cornhill Magazine*. "Dante and the Traveller" contains the substance and some of the phrases of a Lecture. Where translations are not acknowledged they must be affiliated to me.

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CHAPTER I

PREAMBULATORY REMARKS

THE pretensions of this book to be a companion of Tuscan travel, and a leisurely, sententious commentary upon the country, are based upon two convictions: First, that you don't get to know a country by seeing the great towns of it; second, that, let the history, fine arts, monuments, and institutions be as fine as you please, the best product of your country will always be the people of it, who themselves produced those other pleasant spectacles. Upon these two bases I have gone to work. My commentary upon Tuscany was dictated by the logic of the roads, diverted only from its course by the accidents of travel, the humours of the moment, or by the freaks of memory and such like familiar sprites of ours. I hope that I may say I have been strict with myself. I have always preferred a road to a church, always a man to a masterpiece, a singer to his song; and I have never opened a book when I could read what I wanted on the hillside or by the river-bank. Scope of this book.

I never heard of a guide-book to Italy devised upon such a plan. Herr Baedeker loves the train;

Mr. Murray, disembodied from the fetters of time and space, seems to flit from museum to museum, no eye remarking his means of locomotion; the late Professor Ruskin seldom left the pulpit; the late Mr. Grant Allen never left the schoolroom. You must, indeed, go back to the old road-books of our grandfathers' day, which made the mile-stones their first object of interest, the turnpikes their second, the inns their third, and crowded into the last column their references to Livy, Politian, Virgil, Catullus, Dante, and Slawkenbergius, their lapidary lore, temples of Vesta, and battlefields of Hannibal; and in the notes might or might not tell you that Raphael's *Saint Cecilia* was in the gallery of Bologna, and Giulio Romano's *War of the Giants* at Mantua remarkably fine. I have abandoned the mile-stones, the turnpikes; but I have never lain at a good inn without saying so, and as for Dante and Virgil, I should like to know the man who could travel any part of Italy north of the Tiber and keep them out of the country; rather, I had better say, I should not like to know him at all.

But what of Slawkenbergius and Politian? What of battlefields and campaigns—Cæsar's, Hannibal's, Castruccio Castracane's, Grand Duke Cosimo's? What of Petrarch and the Renaissance of elegant literature? What of Giotto's Tower and the Cathedral of Siena, of the Correggiosity of Correggio, and of all the Botticellis which that master did not paint?[1] Here are questions which

[1] I hope it will be observed that I know the trend of modern art-criticism, which does not concern itself with the questions, Did A paint such-and-such, and was it worth painting? but rather with this, Who among all known or unknown painters may have painted such-and-such, hitherto universally attributed to A?

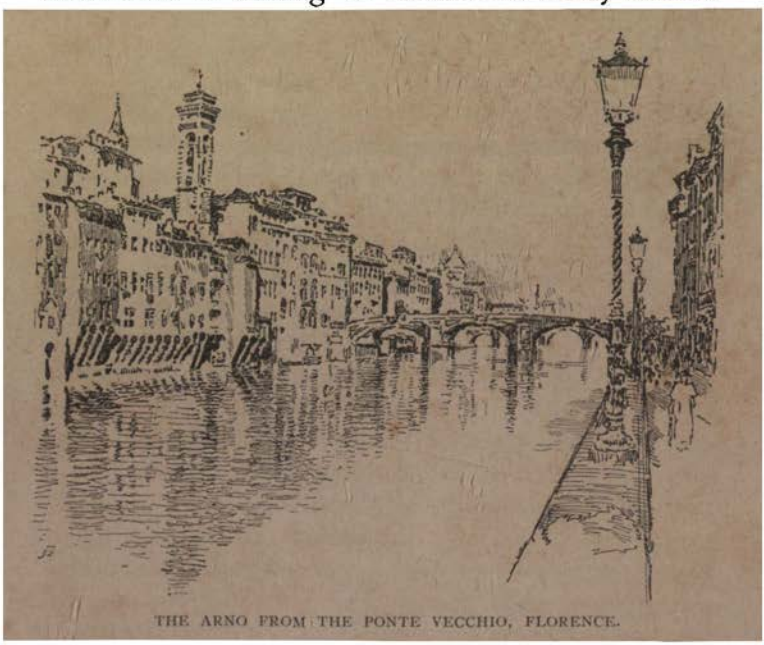
it does not become me to leave unanswered; for it must not hastily be assumed that a road is of necessity more interesting than a battlefield, or a man than a poem, or the parson than his church. Let me take these in order: History, Literature, Fine Art—are not these things in themselves worth studying in Tuscany?

History of Tuscany, and histories of it.

As to History, one would think so indeed. There are more histories of Florence than there are of Russia, and some of them very admirable, and all very long. I suppose there is no great nation in Europe with a finer set of chronicles of its own. Those of the Villani dynasty alone would have made of English history a different thing. From the unknown chronicler of the *Dugento* onwards to Grand-Ducal Galluzzi there cannot be a year for which there is no account from an eye-witness, nay, from an actor in the deeds done. Add to these the diarists, the letter-writers; remember Sacchetti the novelist; crown all with Dante himself. Observe what a field for your Tiraboschis and Muratoris, your brochurists, your *memoires-pour-servir*-men, your Graingers, who, taking a vapid novel like *Marietta de' Ricci*, annotate it into a Dictionary of National Biography! But this is not all. Turn over the spade-and-rudder work of the *Osservatore Fiorentino*, the learned *excursus* of the R. P. Rica, S.J.; take some account of the academic exercises of Poggio, Filelfo, and Machiavelli, all three masters of the art of writing history and leaving out nearly all the facts; ponder Guicciardini and his fellows;—digest all this if you are able, and then cease to wonder that Captain Napier, Mr. Trollope, Monsieur Perrens,

and two hundred other gentlemen, have felt themselves justified in co-ordinating as much of the stuff as they could handle, and in calling the outcome a History of the Florentine Republic, or of the Grand Duchy of Tuscany.

Leaving aside what I might urge as to the unwisdom of adding to labours so many and so



THE ARNO FROM THE PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE.

various, I shall take leave to say that a history of Florence or of Tuscany is but a history by sufferance. There can be no history (in the great sense) of anything but a nation in relation to nations. Florence was too small a nation to establish any such relationships; and Tuscany was never a nation at all. To decide whether or not the old Etruscan hegemony of cities

formed a nation of Etruria is not so easy as it sounds, and is not important to you at this moment, seeing that the confines of the Etruscan races went as far as Rome on the south and Bologna on the north, nearly half as much ground again as I shall ask you to traverse. The only so-called "country" I can talk about is the Tuscany of the Countess Maud's time, of Dante's, of the Medici's times; and of that Tuscany I say that it is a geographical expression, useful to cover all the nations who have seethed and settled between the Apennines and the Tiber. There were scores and fifties of these, many more than Sismondi took account of; indeed, I shall have to say more than once or twice in the course of this work, that every little white-washed village on every little olive-blurred hill was at one time or another, in all essential respects, a "nation" sufficient unto itself. Whether there had been in the dim backward of time a kinship, a community, a tie between the men of Volterra and the men of Grosseto, or between the men of little Pistoja and the men of little Certaldo—to collocate names at random—one neither knows nor need care. The facts are that during all the time of the written word these various folk, if not at civil war within their own walls, or at war with their neighbours, were suffering the inevitable upshot of such a state and getting enslaved by some rival or another. A Tuscan hegemony was never nearer the fact than when there was a Guelfic League; a Tuscan Empire lived only in the dreams of Dante and Castruccio; a Tuscan Republic was flicked out like a soap-bubble when Burlamacchi, poor frothy creature, lost his head.

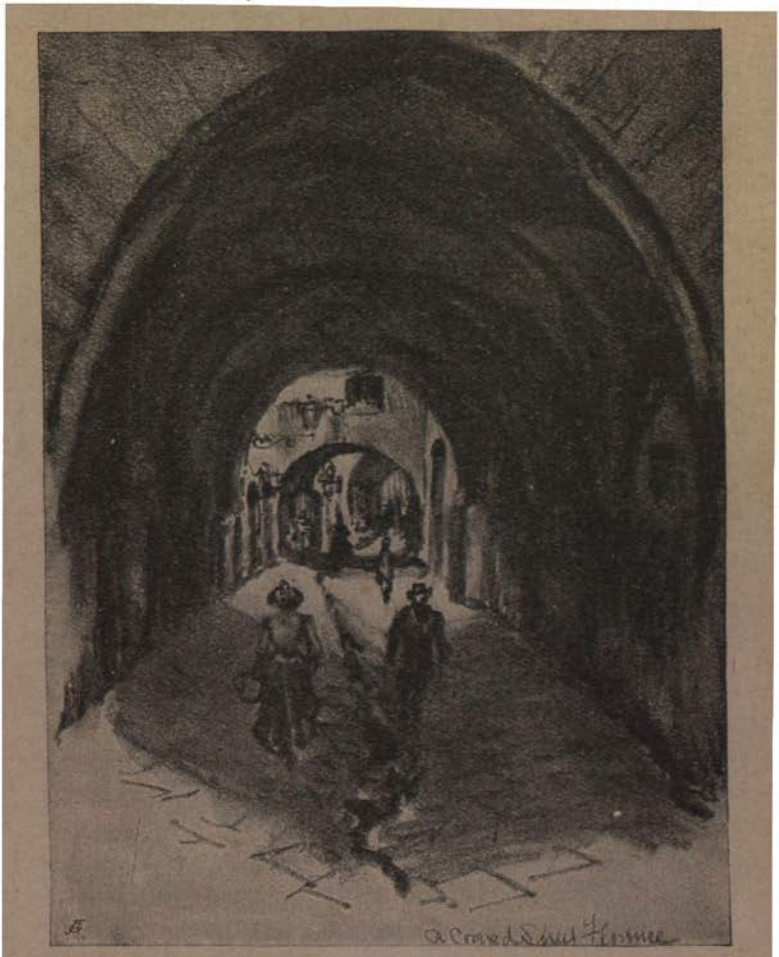
That which did ensue, an enslaving, to wit, of nearly every Tuscan nation by the Florentine, never made a nation of Tuscany. The people had one master, but that master had not one people. The federation was too late. The Pisan remained of Pisa,[1] the Aretine of Arezzo, each hating, fearing, scorning the Florentine[2]—who, for his part, cordially returned the whole of the compliment. Two things flow from that: the first, that to talk of a history of Tuscany is to talk nonsense; the second, that local character, local idiosyncrasy, local manifestation are the points of supreme interest for the intelligent traveller.

To say this is also to say that if any one of these towns has no history (in the world-sense), it has a biography, which is a sum of all the biographies of all its unknown citizens—the men who sat at its councils, ruled its markets, built its churches, painted its walls, and wrote its little books and sonnets; yes, and sang under its daughters' windows o' nights, and hoed its vines, and pruned its olives, and urged its great pale oxen along its furrows. This is the real history of Poggibonsi, and Barga, and Sinalunga, which I have tried to get at; I am entitled to say that the desire for this has never left me in my journeyings by the Tuscan roads; and that in framing my commentary upon them, whensoever I have come across history, or poem, or deed, or painting which has in any sense illustrated this, it is here—or the mischief is in it. For once more I say, this is worth doing; and once more, if all the things we call Tuscan art are good, then the

[1] And does to this day; and so do all the others.

[2] See Appendix I. to this chapter—History of Florence.

Tuscans who made them should be better. And the fact is, they *are* better, much better; and I



A COVERED STREET, FLORENCE.

propose to prove it in a stout volume, illustrated by my friend Mr. Pennell.

If I treat history in this cavalier fashion, making it a mere quarry for my building, what of Literature? How are we to handle Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio; Politian, the Pulci, Lorenzo; Machiavelli, Guicciardini, Michael Angelo, or any other triad you like to object against me in these pages? Much in the same fashion, I fancy, taking what we can get out of them to illuminate our Tuscans and Tuscany, in the sure and certain hope that what in them exhibits the Tuscan nations will also exhibit themselves. I don't pretend, even in a preface, to say that I think any of these gentry of much account as poets—except Dante.[1] I think they were victims of the common Italian complaint—which decimated Tuscany, while it was epidemic all over the peninsula—which you may call artists' itch—the disease of longing to say something without having anything in particular to say. But it was difficult even for Petrarch to be simply wordy; therefore Petrarch, so far as he has content, shall be useful on the road. The time is not now for estimating Tuscan literature. The glamour is still upon us. Petrarch is one of our household gods; and the very measure of the reprobation we have for Boccaccio is the measure of the level on which we put him. Possibly if we did not think him the greatest of the pornographers we should think him less of a story-teller. I shall have occasion to class him below Sacchetti in the latter degree.

Literature.

But if the Tuscan poets (Dante apart) and novelists (Sacchetti apart) are not greatly forward in this book the fault is not mine. They are an

[1] Except, also, Machiavelli—a manifest immortal.

indoor company, their books are library affairs; they have little to say of Tuscany, and not much that is illuminative of the Tuscans. Victims, one and all of them, of the great theory, that the World is a Garden, they are properly to be treated of in the chapter which I devote to it. Otherwise they tell us little, and all the use they are is to help us estimate the mischief they wrought among the Tuscan nations; for a mischief it was to have obscured the greatness of Dante for near six hundred years, and a gross mischief to have convinced respectable persons—Donna Berta and Ser Martino included—that the rough, dusty, sweating, windy world was a combed and windless garden made for our delight. Let me not be understood to say that the Tuscan chamber-minstrels and jongleurs are unworthy your study and mine. Far from that; there is no school where I can learn more, and no better company for me in the world—within doors. Read Petrarch in your mistress's bower and Boccaccio in bed; admire the airy flight of Pulci's butterfly-wings; keep Machiavelli for the study, and Lorenzo and Politian for the summer-house; but don't encumber your carriage with any one of them. Leave their room for Repetti, who will want all of it. That rascal has seven volumes to his credit. And, I must be pardoned for adding, never, never leave Dante behind you wheresoever you adventure in Tuscany; and if you forget your Sacchetti and are sorry for it, blame not me. He is the greatest of the novelists.

The railways, the love of towns, and the worship of Art have worked together in a vicious

circle which has become like a whipcord round the neck of the intelligent traveller. It matters little with which you begin, the others are in a concatenation. Take the last first. Italian art in all its manifestations has been isolated and magnified until we have lost sight of the fact to which I made bold to call attention just now—that if the product is interesting the producer must have been, at least, equally interesting. Well, pictures and sculptures have been herded into town museums; the railways have borne us from town to town—not that we may pretend to visit a country, but rather that we may walk through museums. Or take the love of town-life as your point of departure. Can you blame the Syndic or his advisers for robbing the country churches of their pictures, or the railways for running expresses which only stop once between Bologna and Florence, or Florence and Rome? I shall have much to say of the towns as I go along: one cannot ignore them; one would be a fool if one did. But I hope that I have always kept in view this fact, that the towns are fed upon country blood, and are therefore useful; but that they corrupt it in the process of assimilation, and therefore hardly ever show you the true people of the nation, any more than they can (nowadays) exhibit to you the true people of the town—the true burghers, in fact—men like John Arnolfini of Lucca, as we have him in our National Gallery, or Giovanni Bicci de' Medici, as you can see him in the Uffizii—the men who made it what it is; built the churches, painted the frescoes, fought on the walls, or enriched themselves by usury. But I am wandering away from Art.

Art.

I can't afford to be delicate in my usage of works of Fine Art; nor will the traveller of the

NEAR THE PONTE VECCHIO.

true sort—the adventurer, I like to call him—be tempted to stand on any more ceremony than I

have been. Be he in church or gallery, in villa or Campo Santo, next to the rational enjoyment which he will never fail to get out of beautiful or curious things, and all the chords of memory or feeling which they pluck at, he is most likely to use the masterpieces he sees as so many short cuts to the minds or hearts of the men who made them, and of those for whom they were made. Let him once realise that Donna Berta and Ser Martino[1] were, as likely as not, the painters or the patrons of these things, and he will have no hesitation. He will read pictures as if they were guide-books:—as indeed they are in Italy, and second to none. Æsthetic, archæology, ecclesiology, hagiology will mean nothing to my man, who, if he is offered a work of (say) Duccio of Siena as an intellectual puzzle of the first order, will no doubt reply, "The question whether this or that bad picture is by Duccio or Cimabue is nothing to me. Sufficient is it that somebody painted the thing, and to somebody's order. Now, how near does it take me to those dead people in whose country I stand?" Nor will he be tempted to soar with long-pinioned Mr. Ruskin in warm, ethical waves of air. He will not unduly tingle with the thought that Botticelli could paint roses, nor be crudely depressed to remember that Cuyp preferred cowskin or Ghirlandajo napery. Why on earth should they not? Every field of Art is a welcome field when once you can see the people who till it, and those who go a-reaping there. Lastly, let *technique* and all such frippery be far from him. These things conceal exactly what he wishes to discover; they are trade secrets

[1] See Appendix II. to this chapter—Donna Berta and Ser Martino.

which amuse and instruct the trade. Let cooks take delight in the mixing of the dishes, but let gentlemen eat of them.

No; let my adventurer be happy in Tuscany, and learn to look upon cities, great buildings, pompous monuments, gilded altar-pieces, carved Madonnas, as so much harvest for his eye, neither the best nor the worst. The best is a wise man or a pretty woman, the worst a railway or a bore. There is plenty room between these extremes for altar-pieces. If he must have a curious inquiry beyond the picturesque, the romantic, or the happy accident, it shall not be (if I can help him) among dead dogs, but rather among live men and beating hearts. The hearts of the men of the Tuscan nation are worth finding out.

Considering now the matter more nicely,—the sights, sounds, smells, methods, manners, and ways of doing,—let the modern adventurer consider that he is going to a country where the best is dead or dying, and play the reactionary as far as he can. If he is minded to get close to old Tuscany, to converse at first hand with the Tuscans, and to consider the noble side by side with the base, I can promise him he will do better on the highway than the railway. This, with its intolerable apparatus of iron, smoke, and noise, and the venal cosmopolitans who are paid to do its service and do it not unless you pay them more, has driven a broad furrow across and across the land; and wherever it has stayed there has leaked out of it over the town or village some poisonous breath, as it were, to kill every natural thing. Uniformity

Invective against the railway.

is the staple of its beastly food; it goes by clockwork and expects you to live by it. Here is why every railway station and railway suburb is like every other. There is nothing to be learned from such travel but how to keep your temper, or when to lose it.[1]

The country way.

You cannot learn the ways of a country except by keeping to its ways; nor was a more disastrous fallacy ever contrived by man than that which bade him suppose that by going to a foreign town you were travelling in a foreign country. Why, just consider that in Florence, for instance, you never need speak or hear any language but your own. Indeed, I suppose a British dowager could travel from Chiasso to Syracuse and never be at the want of a cup of tea at five o'clock! All this, of course, is a melancholy travesty of travel. Speaking lightly, if it were not for the glory of the thing, a panorama, faintly smelling of coffee, oranges, and cigars (with a whiff of garlic "to animate the whole") would do as well. I don't want to pitch my pipe too high, or I would counsel every man to go afoot—which was Jean-Jacques Rousseau's way, or on horseback, which was Montaigne's. This is how Don Quixote also travelled; it is the real thing, other ways are makeshifts. However, let me avoid extremes, and my client take a carriage. So Goethe, Mr. Young, Signor Casanova, Monsieur Bourget, Mr. Rogers, and other honourable men saw Italy. And they were very wise.

[1] It is worthy of remark, also, that the moment travelling by road ceased, the writing of good travel books ceased also. I believe Mr. Howells wrote the last of them.

On the road you are slowly[1] prepared for the succession of wonders that awaits you; by the lessons of the road you learn that a country is a harmony, and not an expression of political geography. You pick your way among unknown peoples by their hedgerows, their church steeples, the tools by which they raise their bread, by the flowers that grow in their fields, and the flowers that are their faces. You make romance, you read it as you pass, you are it; for to these moving flowers and weeds of a distant soil, these magnificently posed youths and maids (with their tragic eyes), these infinitely venerable old men and infinitely wise old women, you yourself are the transient wonder—as portentous as a meteor—and as such you must prepare to be received. There is no avoiding this. Nearly all the men will salute you as you pass—"*Felice sera*," charming, kindly phrase!—and many of the women; they will gather about your inn-door, prepared for any astonishment, pester your driver with questions—and you shall hear him answer!—admire your horses, gape to hear of London, Paris, or Milan the rich city. Should you suffer it—and why not?—many an animated debate will be held in the kitchen that night, and your name, person, rank, and fortune be so many shuttlecocks to be beaten to and fro by the most agile, curious, witty and dramatic folk in Europe. You might suppose that, yourself being a spectacle, it would be difficult to catch your spectators unawares, that while they were gaping at you, you would be estopped from gaping

Praise of the road.

[1] Six miles an hour, all over, is good for a Tuscan pair of horses; thirty miles a day as much as they care about. I have done fifty at a push.

at them. It is not really difficult where the auditorium is so many and the actor but one—and he unwillingly a player. I don't know whether Mr. Tree, that leisurely performer, has time to study the humours of his assistance; but if he have, I'll be bound he is amused. I do think that, rightly reading as you go, and wheresoever you go, and howsoever (except in a train), with your instincts quick, your fancy alight, and all your sympathies generously warm—you will learn at every turn of your wheels. Anyhow, I can only speak of what I know. I know there is no other way to learn a country.[1]

Choice of a road of approach.

This being made plain, let every man approach Tuscany as he will or as he can. The realm of France is a great realm; rather, it is half a dozen. That is a very good way which takes you by Beauvais through Burgundy into Savoy, and thence into Piedmont. The other, which keeps west of Paris and goes by Chartres, Nevers, and Le Puy, takes you from Avignon by Aix-en-Provence to the Corniche. By either you will learn, better perhaps than by the Swiss roads (whereon the transition into Italy is too gradual for my taste), how irrepressible is innate art. Chambéry is pure French; St. Jean-de-Maurienne is transition. Modane, the grey frontier town, pinched and withered by the mountain air, may be French politically, but its church tells the truth. That has a Lombard belfry—a square shaft, a conical peak flanked by four smaller, the long plain barrel and bald façade which you will find from here to Vicenza, and as far south as Sassolo.

[1] There is the sea-way, no doubt; but that is not for queasy stomachs.

Here is the first indication you receive, for the

VIA TORNABUONI, FLORENCE.

people tell you nothing. They are of a breed peculiar to the Alps, neither of Savoy nor of

Piedmont. And then, as you get down the terrific Mont Cenis to Sant' Ambrogio, to Susa, to Turin and the plain, and long before you reach the Po, every dimple and fold of this grey, sunny country full of light, these deep-eaved naked houses, made for a people that lives all in the open, and does but go home to go to bed; these gaunt, weathered churches (with their evidence of a religion grown stale, but grown also a part of nature)—so empty and so big, worn by dust, and sun, and torrential rains;—all these things tell you that you have left fair France, whether the towns be called Exilles or Oulx, or the snow-spikes Roche-Michel or Pic de Rochebrune. You learn too—nor will a full experience of Italy materially stir your opinion—that this is not a green country. Greenness is of the north and west, where the sun, its hearty enemy, is tempered. Italy is a grey country, flushed with green in the spring, dusty grey all the summer (under a pearl-grey sky), grey bleached to white after the winter floods; grey earth, grey tree-stems, grey olives, grey grass, and a blue heaven over a grey-green river swirling through pale sands. This is the colour of Tuscany, and of much of the Lombard plain, which certain painters of old have caught and translated: Giotto bluntly after his manner, Piero della Francesca patiently after his; a poetical, wizardish Alessio Baldovinetti also, once; the others (incurably hunting their fairy tales and indoor-pieces) never. I don't know whether these sort of things—examples merely—are worth a carriage and a couple of horses. To me, travelling, they are everything in life; and very nearly the only use

of painters' work is to enable me to relate and connote them. They are as devoutly to be sought by the lover of the land as the play of light and colour upon his mistress's cheek, or the turn of her head when she is put out. They are not to be seen from the windows of a railway carriage, through the mounting and falling telegraph wires.

From Bologna, the learned city, dignified by Della Quercia beyond its deserts, but proved pure in heart by Francia[1]—that city where Monsieur de Stendhal talked scandal with princesses all night, and Napoleoniana with *abbés* all day—from Bologna, I say, you cross the Reno by an ancient bridge, a river whose issue from the rocks on a northerly course will be your first indication of Tuscany. Hence you must drive the last stretches of the immense plain, and slowly see the country receive hints of the south. The familiar sights will still be there: the vine everywhere, still the Lombard poplar, acacias, hacked mulberry. After Bologna, going south, the cypresses begin to recall the First Eclogue, solemn files of them, beckoning like digits your way to church or burial-place in holy acre; but more slowly the mulberry gives way to the olive. That is a tree which asks for two things Emilia cannot give — hill-slopes and a southern face to the sun. You must not look for them much before Pracchia; but the cypresses

Graduale.

[1] If you doubt this allusive remark, the next time you are in Bologna, look at the sculptures round the porch of San Petronio, and Francia's Marriage and Death of Saint Cecilia—and then say if there is anything else in Bologna to compare with the first, or no chance for a people any one of whom could see women like Francia's being married or buried. That such women still live in Bologna these eyes can testify, but as yet their Francia awaits reincarnation.

should be welcome enough. Monte della Guardia, a pyramidal hill with a great domed church like a crown in the sky, has a grove of them. This is the landmark for Bologna; you see it until you are deep in the folds of the mountains. There the sweeping curves of the fine road you must travel bury you in rocks, wood, and water; you have no thought but of the penury of man and his abject little circumstance. Given you are impressionable, open to the pathetic fallacy, not ten of your forty miles in solitary places will have been told before you feel the heart of a lost child panic-blown in your body, and all your being wailful for a sight of the lowlands.

This is how mountains affect a man of less kindred with the infinite than Shelley. Man that is born of woman is born also of a house and a bed. A church is his familiar room. There he receives the chrism and salt, there he receives the sacrament. Out of a house, into a church, back to a house he takes his wife; from a house to a church he or she is taken and the other left. So the days go round. Set him under the frowning side of a mountain, in sight of frozen peaks, while he is swept by a ground wind, or to see all their banners a-flacking in a gale while he strives in dead air — he cannot find his gods, and is appalled to find himself of no account at all. How he desires and looks all ways for a hint of home. If some poor hind, needing the same assurance, has set a cross in his tilth to scare away devils from his beans, or daubed Madonna on a wall and served her with nosegays from the

Mountains.

meadows, the pale traveller warms and is comforted. Brother man has been here; God is not far off then. Courage, my good friend, skirt one more misty gorge, toil about the base of Monte Cimone: this good road on which you are was built by a Grand Duke Leopold, a man even as you, with all your present need of God. Spy about you for the ragged head of Monte Calvi, which hides up Pracchia; once there, you will have done your five-and-forty miles from Bologna; take to the inn, though it be bad, for the mountain is worse. And next morning get up before the sun strikes your chill resting-place, and go to that point under the viaduct where Ombrone makes a leap to the south. See far below you the velvet plain, the roads like twisted ribbons, the soft bosses of the trees; and Pistoja in pride, like a dark carpet, flecked here and there with white where the sun gleams on a house's cheek. Men and their busy haunts for a man!—and architecture, which makes the only mountains worthy of a man's care; for they are hollow, and one can hide there from the wind and bitter stars.

Tuscany and the Tuscans.

You descend through chestnut woods to the olives, the festooned vines, all that wonderful, pitiful husbandry of Tuscany, where every foot of land is filled with food, and every man who works it goes hungry. You pass through village after village —Piteccio, San Felice, Candoglia; you reach Pistoja, a little Florence, towered and crowned; you see a great yellow villa with a park and woods. ilex, churches more than enough, with flat-cornered belfries pierced through the upper-

most story; you find also factories, and dwellings for their hands, new-built, flimsy houses in raw patches of ground which were once pastures of this garden-valley. Everything that is beautiful will seem old, and everything new as if made of cardboard. The signs are many that this was once a wealthy kingdom, which could afford to squander its money upon pompous shrines, lay out palaces, gardens, cities on great designs; build solidly, afford to follow the natural bent of its people; and build slowly, being as secure of time as of pence. And that is very truth. Alas and alas! *Etruria fuit* must be said or sung over every stretch of this lovely, wasting land. The people live — Fiorentini, Sanesi, Pisani, Lucchesi—every nation of them as distinct as on the day when their own painters set them on their own church walls: the Tuscans live, but the land is dead. Transformed, they live. At any hour of the day you may see Giovanna degli Albizzi walk in the streets of Florence, or Ilaria Guinigi go like a goddess down the narrow ways of Lucca. Pia de' Tolomei is not dead; she is still recessed in Siena. But Siena herself, "fair, soft Siena"; but Lucca, Florence, and the rest of the Twelve? Dead, frozen, cold as the saints in their feretories; to be worshipped, but not loved—to be seen, but not known again. This is a note of strange and haunting beauty through all the land, which nobody can miss, on which one must harp for the edification of all adventurers who come from the north into Tuscany, their heads full of snatches of history, snatches of art, and their own heart-strings taut to begin the song of Tuscany. They shall make the

Approaches then with some reverence, since reverence is proper to the neighbourhood of the dead.

There is one last preparation to make before

OLD FLORENCE.

we cross the Magra. I mean, to allow for that double face this land will present to all who accost it fairly. You may say that the traveller is like Ulysses in his galley among the rocks. A siren will pipe to him from either hand; one ear or the other he will feel

The double face.

bound to stop with wax. To be plain, two opposing qualities will absorb, perplex, enchant, and confound him—the fine and the base, the noble and the mean, the infinitely great and the infinitely little. Say, an overweening church of golden marble is in view. Enchanting, grandiose, audacious beyond belief. Go near: it is banked in ordure, crusted with dirt, defiled by every act of man; yet appears the more beautiful for its cloak of tatters and filth. Or behold a man shaped like a god, who (as he leans on his spade to observe you) takes the attitude—compact of mystery and power—of the Olympian Hermes, yet who lives with swine and copies their customs. Or find a corniced palace at the angle of a mean lane, with manure heaped in its *cortile*, and slops hanging to dry out of the pedimented windows of the *piano nobile*; and satisfy yourself that the nasty rags, all a-flutter in the wind, look like banners, and that the grave-eyed, watchful, imperturbable people who gaze at you from behind half-opened shutters might be princes of old Florence, or ladies such as those who walk through Ghirlandajo's frescoes. The Prodigal Son could sink no lower than these thrifty poor hinds; sloth could never breed a decay more miserable than that of these peasants who work all day; and how under heaven can a race so shameless as it seems, so lost to reticence, so naked and so unabashed, remain the most modest, the best mannered to be found in Europe? You are torn two ways—towards the noble, towards the vile. For while you are gazing in wonder at some white façade glistening in the sun, trying to conceive of the art which

filled every facet of it with jewelled ornament, with the same motion you are craning your ears towards the old hag mumbling enchantments by the door, or are painfully intent on the Donatellesque *putti* tumbling in the dust below the steps. Once upon a time your inn will have been a palace; in your bedroom, as likely as not, there will be half the carved front of a fireplace. Lean out of window, you may touch with your hand the smooth-worn Piccolomini crescents, or the negro-head of the dead and gone Pucci. In that very act your eye will be caught by the wonderful landscape of roof and gable, well-head and casement, and drain-pipes like the trunks of creeping trees on all sides of the view. The colour of all this—yellow, purple, and grey, old red, faint rose, blue-green; its profusion, so needless yet so splendid;[1] its character, its kinship to the hills and the rocks; its beauty, disgustfulness, calm strength, patience, and humility—all this, I say, will catch your breath at first gaze. And while you look, an ostler will lead an old horse out of a dark entry, and talk to it with the coaxing vocables a mother uses to her child; and a girl will put a cushion on the window-sill, lean her bare arms there, and cry strangely intimate matter to another across two streets, singing the pretty names of things not pretty, caressing her friend from afar. Also the chambermaid, probably toothless and certainly in slippers, will come out on to a foliated balcony and empty slops out of the window next your own, seeing no harm and meaning none—what time a heavy bell, hidden but very close, will

[1] And so extraordinarily like nature.

toss and wrangle the *Ave Maria*, or First Hour of the Night. And all this, and exactly this, will have been seen, heard, and done by the dead Ruccellai, Tarlati, or Della Pecora, now dusty under his marble tomb in the church of Francis or Frediano. Thus History calls you, and present Life; thus Beauty absorbs you, and thus the Squalid; thus the shamelessness frets you with wonder, and thus again that continence which stops dead at a point. Really, however, you may resolve these complexities. The Past lives in the Present, this people has never changed. The fine and the base have the same root. For the Tuscans are unashamed because they are simple, and are modest for the same reason.

The secret.

This is the secret of the contending charms which lure the adventurer now this way and now that in Tuscany. The careless profusion which made the front of the church of Siena a maze of ornament, in which prophets, sibyls, hippogriffs, wolves, elephants, dragons, and virgin martyrs struggle towards the west like tossing sprays of foliage, is born of the same squandering spirit which gave every inn an acreage of roof more than double its own. The mental sloth which made the Tuscans contented under Governments the most corrupt in history, keeps them so under one for which ineptitude would be a flattering apposite. When Beccadelli dedicated to the Pope the most obscene book perhaps ever devised by a Christian, he did no worse than his descendants of to-day, who will talk or write of any function of the body—and yet keep the commandments as well as you or I. One may not be far wrong in reducing the

three of these compound qualities to one common term, or in naming this Simplicity—a limpid sincerity like that of children, who act as they feel, and speak of what they dream, and yet keep a dignity of their own, and know the reserve which Nature puts upon every wholesome creature of hers. That is how I explain, and very much why I love the Tuscan races of the hills and the valleys—the most alert, charming, intelligent, curious people in Europe.

But the horses are at the door; the luggage is strapped up behind. Let us take to the road.

APPENDIX I

HISTORY OF FLORENCE

WITH this one difference—a good one, to be sure—that the rulers of Florence enslaved the other cities of Tuscany one by one, the history of that place is almost precisely that of any one of her neighbours. For Florence was enslaved before she could make slaves, and those others were enslaved before slaves of Florence they could become. Guelf or Ghibelline—skirts of the Emperor or skirts of the Pope by which to cower; robber-count or robber-bishop for tyrant: here was the beginning. The trades waxed impudent, drove out the count, or flouted the bishop: "We will get protection from higher places; go to! let us seek the Emperor's vicar, or Christ's." Guelf or Ghibelline—herein we have the next stage. The next is civil war, or war with your neighbours. Guelf or Ghibelline—the Tuscans choose sides, and in the very act shatter themselves; for within our very walls are partisans of one or other. You shall not say that Florence is for the Pope, or Siena for the Emperor, until the Pope's Florentines have hounded out the Emperor's Florentines, and

Siena has done the like by her own. Then there are Florentine exiles in Siena, and Sienese in Florence; but they keep their nationality still—so that huge Ghibelline Farinata of Florence made discord at the Council of Empoli when his party proposed to pull stone from stone in the city which had bred and then spewed him out; and the Ghibellines found that it was one thing to sting the Pope's flank, and another to get profit out of a neighbour's ruin. But it must never be forgotten, in prying into this sorry business, that the party cries of *Chiesa!* or *Cesare!* meant more often than not trade and monopoly for the criers thereof.

After discord at large came discord in particular: Guelfic Florence was rent again by the Black and Whites tripes. In this ruin Dante fell; for this quarrel Corso Donati shed his life; out of it, to crawl and fasten upon the spent carcase, the Medici came to their own. Of this race you can discern two figures large enough for history—Lorenzo, a crafty tyrant, and Cosimo, a blunt one. Cosimo Primo, indeed, I reckon to be a great figure. He made the Grand Duchy; he handled European tools. He used the Emperor Charles for his purposes—without him he could hardly have got Siena; and when he had done with him, threw him off, and sat still, as if saying: "There then, Sire, you are out and I am in. What will you make of me?" It is more than reasonable to suppose that had Cosimo had sons of his own force, there might have been a kingdom of Italy in the sixteenth century. But he had not. Francis was a moody fool, and Ferdinand a dull man. With the Austrian marriage begins the downfall of the Medici power. The thing was crumbling when Cosimo gave it over; it fell to powder when the blood was mixed, and frittered out with Cosimo III. and Giovanni Gastone, the first a Jesuit, the second a dreary frip. Europe, which had never touched Italy for long together since the Roman Cæsars had made Europe a possibility—Europe stepped in. Lorraine ruled Tuscany, Spain had Lombardy; and the rest, until Buonaparte ruled all, was silence, faintly disturbed by evening parties.

APPENDIX II

DONNA BERTA AND SER MARTINO

THESE are, of course, Dante's typical Florentine couple: his Darby and Joan, as we say. If I am right, and there is no history of Tuscany in the flag-and-trumpet sense worth speaking about, but (on the other hand) a collection to be

CELLINI'S SHOP, PONTE VECCHIO.

made of invaluable biography,—if I am right, why, then, it is the biographies of Donna Berta and Ser Martino we must get at. Could we, for instance, not happen upon some man who might stand up once and for all as a Florentine, Lucchese, Aretine, Volterran, track him from bed to board; in the piazza, in the back-shop, riding afield to count his wethers, steering his galley into foreign ports, wedding some mild-faced lass, and begetting some score of sharp-eyed children; dying at last, fortified by sacraments, and lying with placid, folded hands under some basso-rilievo in Santa Croce?

A dozen of these, each standing for his age, and the thing is done! Donna Berta and Ser Martino are the people you need. Well, I have done my best. Biographies are to be had of persons notable, not so much for what they did, as for what they signified. Buondelmonte, for instance, did very little but get his throat cut in a picturesque, romantic manner. Very true, but he can stand—none better—for that Berserk time when the length of a man's sword was the length of his property, and no one could tell from hour to hour whether his fire would burn upon his hearth, or his house be burned about his ears. No doubt I might add a score, all equally significant. Prince Giovanni Pico, what would he signify? Well, I think he would stand for the age of faërie, the beautiful, solemn, futile, serious, ridiculous young man. That was the age when sonnets were sufficient reward of lovers, and Della Robbia ware could express the Christian verities; when Savonarola said, "Burn the vanities!" and the Florentines burnt *him;* when Ficino sacrificed to Plato, and Poliziano wrote letters like Cicero, and odes like Horace, and erotics like Anacreon, and pastorals like Theocritus. It was the last age when Florentines believed in their own dreams—and had them; it was the fifteenth century. There were the Spaniards to come after that, and the Grand Dukes, Alessandro the black satyr, and Cosimo with his iron club, and the Jesuits, and the *cicisbei*, and the Academy—the lies, the lusts, the blood on the mouth, and the ashes in it; and who so fit to figure it all as Bianca Capello, that "daughter of Venice"? If I had to select one more it would be Giovanni Gastone, the last of the Medici, with his full-moon, chalk face, his wig and his fat-blinded eyes, who had his portrait on the coinage circumscribed, "Imago Dei eminens supra Tuscos." And the thing was true: to this the Florentines had come—that they adored a wig on a wig-block. The pen falters, refuses its office. I do not offer you here any portrait of this Tuscan god. Mr. Pennell, bolder than I, has enjoyed him. With his eclipse Florence fell drowsy, and has drowsed ever since. The wild ass may stamp o'er her head—and does—but will not break her sleep.

Underlying all this welter of futility, unworthy and unsuccessful striving, waste of blood and debauch of honour,

Donna Berta and Ser Martino went their thrifty, industrious way, and may be seen at it in peeps afforded by century after century. Dante is full of their probity and frugal cheer—Bellincion Berti was of that family, and so was Cacciaguida. Sacchetti shows them to you—ridiculously enough—fishing for pigs in the well, and in other no less absurd cases; but

A COPPERSMITH, FLORENCE.

they cease not to be admirable. Cosimo Vecchio, Cosimo P. P., was one of them, a shrewd, frosty old burgess, whose politics were an extension of business; Pandolfini or Alberti, whichever wrote the remarkable treatise, *Del Governo della Famiglia*, was in the direct line. Thrift, thrift, thrift! is all his cry. The Piovano Arlotto was a facetious member of the family. And so we go on, tracing the fine couple down and down the ages, until, in this very day, I could take you directly

to some twenty dozen brace of them who have never stirred out of their *sestiere*, never missed an evening at the *caffè* since they were married, nor a mass at the Annunziata or Trinità during the same time. Whose biographies are not to be written, nor their minds ever disclosed; for there are no materials for the first and of the second they have hidden the key. Yet they were the staple of Florence, and in them is all the worth of the place and all the hope it has. From them came the wool-carding and cloth-traffic; they struck the florins of thin fine gold; they lent the money for all the great enterprises, and they took the interest and lent that. Much more than that, from them came the brains and craft which have made the name of Florentine one to conjure with. Boccaccio and Sacchetti were little priests; Giotto was a goatherd; Benozzo, Ghirlandajo, Luca della Robbia, Mino, Desiderio, Rossellino, Pollajuolo—of what kindred were these but of Donna Berta's and Ser Martino's? They kept shops and worked in them the livelong day; they spun their wares out of their heads and bargained for them. A patron comes in to command a picture: hear them chaffer it out. Madonna with the Bimbo on her knees—so much; blue cloak, crimson robe—so much; Sant' Antonino on one side, San Giovanni on t'other, *angiolino* with a lute on the steps of the throne—so much; *grandezza*, so many *bracchie*; *fondo d' oro*—so much. Predella—ah, he wishes a predella? *Dunque*, Resurrection in the middle—announcing angel on the left hand, receiving Madonna on the right hand—or shepherds to left, Magi to right—little figures, figurini—at so much per inch. It was an affair of the yard measure and the scales, you perceive—and why, in Heaven's name, should it not be? What man of genius was ever the worse for being honest? How many have tried it since their day? Did our deer-stealing Shakespeare? Did our beery Ben? Did the great Samuel Johnson himself, with his "poverty, total idleness, and the pride of literature"? But had Sir Walter the less honour because he lived like a gentleman and paid his way by trading his brains? I trow not. Genius in a dressing-gown living on credit was not the Florentine way—at any rate until Benvenuto Cellini's time; and then, genius being worn something thin, had to give itself the greater airs; just as Casanova, admitting he was not a gentleman, rounded upon you by saying, the greater the necessity to give himself

the carriage of one. So he travelled in a coach and six, and swindled a silly old woman to pay for it.

No; it was the magnificoes who blew trumpets and levied wars, but Donna Berta and Ser Martino made Florence, made all Tuscany. All honour to the pair! These pages shall try to do them justice.

THE SHRINE IN BORGO S. JACOPO.

CHAPTER II

DANTE AND THE TRAVELLER: NOT TO BE OMITTED BY THE JUDICIOUS

If you remember what couple of books were in Shelley's jacket pockets when they found him strewn like a weed on the sands at Lerici, I need not be at the labour of enumerating them; though, in fact, they were a Keats and a Sophocles. No bad library for a man at any time but when he is in the act to swim for his life.[1] Yet my ideal traveller in Tuscany, my Adventurer, to whom I address this book, will give up one or the other in order that he may have the *Divine Comedy* permanently in one of his pockets. Having it there he may be sure of being accompanied in his wanderings by the very genius of the place. There are many reasons why this should be so, and still more why it *is* so. I shall not deal with many of them, but such as I do deal with shall be sledge-hammer reasons.[2]

If you desire a test of a man's fitness to con-

[1] Shelley could not swim.

[2] One excellent reason (omitted) is that every reasonable man must have a volume of poetry by him, and that Dante is the only Tuscan poet.

duct you about his own country, I advise you to examine his behaviour towards the rivers and hills of it. If he steers by them, you may trust him. If you find that they are his intimates — living creatures, persons, characters to him—you will do well to make much of him: he is a picked man. It is well known that certain countries there are where all men steer themselves by rivers, and that England is not one, at all events not south of the Tyne. In Northumberland it is still common—possibly also in Cumberland—but in the shires it is a choice between a public-house and a turnpike, and in the south it is the London Road. In Scotland rivers are always landmarks; and there you find people talking of them as if they were persons. I mean that they don't use the formality of the article. It is never The Tweed or The Teviot; always Tweed and Teviot, Till and Tyne. "Tweed's in flood the day," "Till's verra sma'." That habit of mind, I have noticed, is universally evident in Tuscan speech, though very rare in that hot-house affair, Tuscan literature. I will lay the odds against your finding it in Boccaccio. But the street urchins of Florence, the bargemen and dredgers of Empoli, the brickmakers of Rotta, and facchini of Pisa, never talk to each other, or even to you, of "the river" as we Londoners proudly use, never of The Arno. "Good fish in Arno"; "neap-tide in Arno." And so it is with small streams like the Arbia by Siena, or the Ombrone, or the Elsa, or that willow-hemmed Archiano which carried Buonconte's body to Arno and the sea. The people have always known them so, and the true poets, whose rhythm seems to

Rivers and hills.

represent the heart of the people at the highest beat—your Burns, your Dante, and Leopardi—have never known them otherwise.

Consider also how the ballad-mongers of the Scots border handled their brooks and bogs and hill-tops. Remember "Jamie Telfer of the Fair Dodhead"—a famous fragment of the Epic of Thieving:—

The ballad-mongers.

He has turn'd him to the Teviot side
E'en as fast as he could drie,
Till he cam to the Coultart Cleugh,
And there he shouted baith loud and hie.

. . . .

Warn Wat o' Harden and his sons,
Wi' them will Borthwick Water ride,
Warn Gaudilands and Allanhaugh
And Gillmanscleugh and Commonside.

. . . .

Ride by the gate at Priesthamswire
And warn the Currors of the Lee;
As ye cum doun the Hermitage Slack
Warn doughty Willie of Gorrinberrie. . . .

What are these—Gaudilands and Allanhaugh, and the rest of them? They are people and they are lands; you can't separate them. The men grew from the soil, and took name and colour from it; the poet was but making music of them and their common speech. What else would you have him do?

Return to Dante. There was the ballad-monger in him fast enough, down deep at the root of him. In a substantial sense his poem is a string of ballads, and, in that sense only, an epic. I don't think the man can ever be understood until that fact about

Of whom Dante was one.

him is accepted. Examples abound. Observe how he talks to Guido of Montefeltro about Romagna :—

> Ravenna sta come stata è molt' anni ;
> L' aquila da Polenta là si cova
> Sì che Cervia ricopre co' suoi vanni.

Is not that like the Hermitage Slack and "doughty Willie"? It is exactly like it.

Now go on :—

> La città di Lamone e di Santerno
> Conduce il leoncel dal nido bianco,
> Che muta parte dalla state al verno.

What are these cities which no geographer marks on his map? The northern balladist who should sing of the towns of Tyne and Tweed would be understood to refer to Berwick and Newcastle by that periphrasis. So this Tuscan ballad-monger refers to Faenza on the little Lamone and Imola by the little Santerno. The "leoncel dal nido bianco"? It is as if one should hit off the Percy as "the stiff-tailed lion"—which Sir Walter Scott would have done without winking, if he had chosen. And although, with Sir Walter, this periphrastic utterance was assumed and wilful, with Dante it was not. It was the language of his countrymen made splendid, turned from the uses of landmarks to those of high poetry.

Rivers were persons to Dante.

See now how he personifies and individualises his rivers. Burns did that, and never found the same verb do for two of them—

> Where Cart rins *rowin'* to the sea,

fairly hits off Cart. But it's

> Among the bonnie winding banks,
> Where Doon rins *wimplin'* clear,

when it's a case of the brawling Doon.

Here then is Dante :—

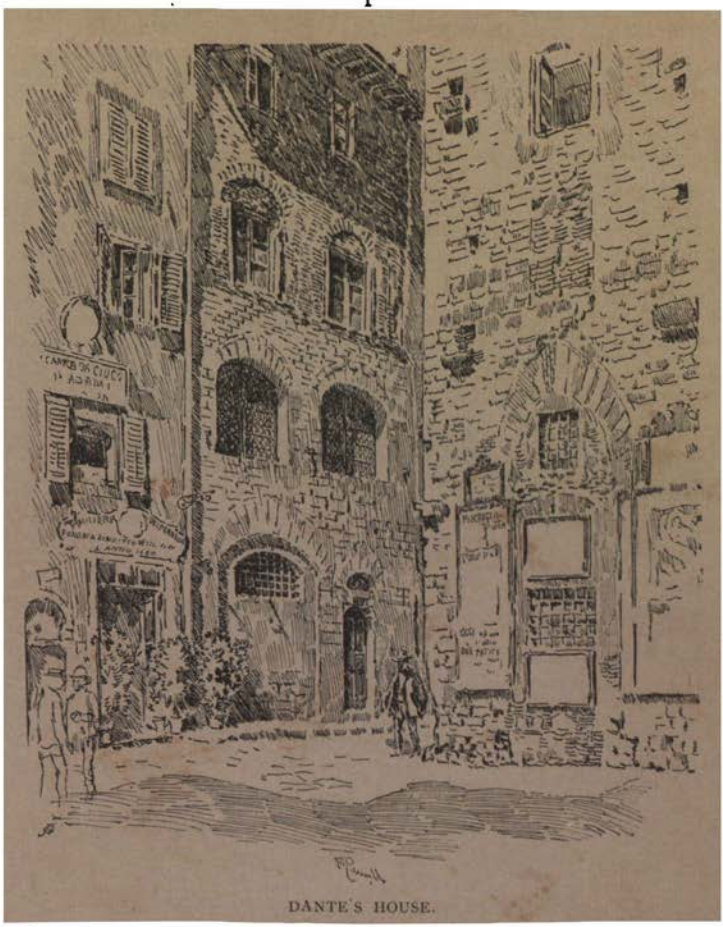
> Siede la terra dove nata fui
> Sulla marina dove Po discende
> Per aver pace co' seguaci sui.

Per aver pace—a lovely phrase! The river, in that sandy criss-cross of channels, was hunted, tormented, alive to him. So again of the Arno—

> Chè dal principio suo, dov' *è si pregno*
> L' alpestro monte, ond' è tronco Peloro,
> Che in pochi lochi passa oltra quel segno
> . . . . .
> Tra brutti porci, più degni di galle,
> Che d' altro cibo fatto in uman uso,
> *Dirizza* prima il suo povero calle.
> Botoli trova poi, venendo giuso,
> Ringhiosi più che non chiede lor possa,
> Ed a lor, *disdegnosa, torce il muso.*

So again of the birth of Adige in the Tridentine Alps, so of Arles "where *ponds* the Rhone," so of the Elsa, Arbia, Cecina. I suppose for once that he directs you by the name of a town, he chooses its river or hills nine times—and familiarly, and as being to being, as one to whom the world at large and in detail—meadow, grove, and stream, the earth and every common sight—is either host or fellow-adventurer. Our brother the earth; our sister the water; *Messer frate lo Sole.* Ah, but you need this in your companion of travel, especially if you are in any doubt as to whether you have it yourself.

It is no part of my business to prove to you that Dante could make pictures of travel.[1] But



DANTE'S HOUSE.

the fact that he could make them with a terrible terseness, a terrible grip of the essentials, a terrible familiarity with the within and the

[1] See some in Appendix I. to this chapter.

without both of the thing seen and of the average beholder of it—for *terribilità* is the word for such superhuman knowingness as his—that he could do it as nobody dead or to be born has ever succeeded or can ever succeed, is surely an uncommon good reason for taking him with you—you who wish to travel rationally. I agree with an accomplished and very wise traveller of our day who has lately advised the proper use of a guide-book to be *after* travel, and not before or during its performance. Let anticipation (always at its best without much material) and adventure have their fling. When you are at home in flat, orderly, green England, where the skies are softly grey, and the light slow to come and loath to go, where the lands are like parks and the towns like large villages; where the great stark towers, and square villas, the jutting cornices and dust-encloaked Madonnas of the street-corners have lost their edge and are, as it were, blurred in the hot mists of memory—then is the time to take to Dante, and read the canto beginning—

Picture making.

> In quella parte del giovinetto anno
> Che il sole i crin sotto Aquario tempra;

or Buonconte's—

> Li ruscelletti che dei verdi colli
> Del Casentino discendon giuso in Arno,
> Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli.

But I said that I should not quote pictures.

External nature, the forms, colours, and accidents of things—to the painters so much—are, in truth, little to him. He soon swings himself up to heights where none can surely reach after him. There is no

By the way in Dante.

poet in the round of Time more keenly alive to Nature, closer to her breast, or better nourished from that fount; but unlike Wordsworth he never gets drunk upon his bever. No fallacy, pathetic or other, interrupts the travel of his ordered mind. He never finds the dædal earth symptomatic of the divine thought, gets no spheral music from the singing wind.[1] Absorbed in what we have in us of incorruptible, he is attentive, rapt upon the hour when we shall put off this corruptible. In fact, he treats the things of sense as pastime, as utensils, as one may use one's happy chances; and throws them aside when he comes in touch with substantial things. Here he strikes quick into the heart of life, and his effects are so overmastering precisely because they depend so lightly upon the æsthetic and so deeply upon the ethic base. Moving as are the sights and sounds about him, poignant as the play he makes with them—the wailing story of Francesca, the knotting of snakes about the thieves, the pity of La Pia, or terror of Ugolino at pasture upon his enemy; greatest of all, the reddening of the East and veiling of the sun when the cry goes up on the Purgatorial slopes, *Veni, sponsa de Libano,* and

> Sopra candido vel, cinta d' oliva,
> Donna m' apparve, sotto verde manto,
> Vestita di color di fiamma viva;

it is neither the wringing of hands nor the shuddering of breath, nor the sight of red teeth or lascivious worms, nor the loveliness of woman, nor the piety of her love, which makes these images exquisite art and sublime poetry. No;

[1] *Light* is the only phenomenon of ours which really gives him pause.

it is the inner vision of the heart of them all, the well of tears, the seeding-pit of shame and sin, the leaping core of the fire of love; it is that second-sight of his which lifts him above us. He is a maker of images because he is a seër of them :—

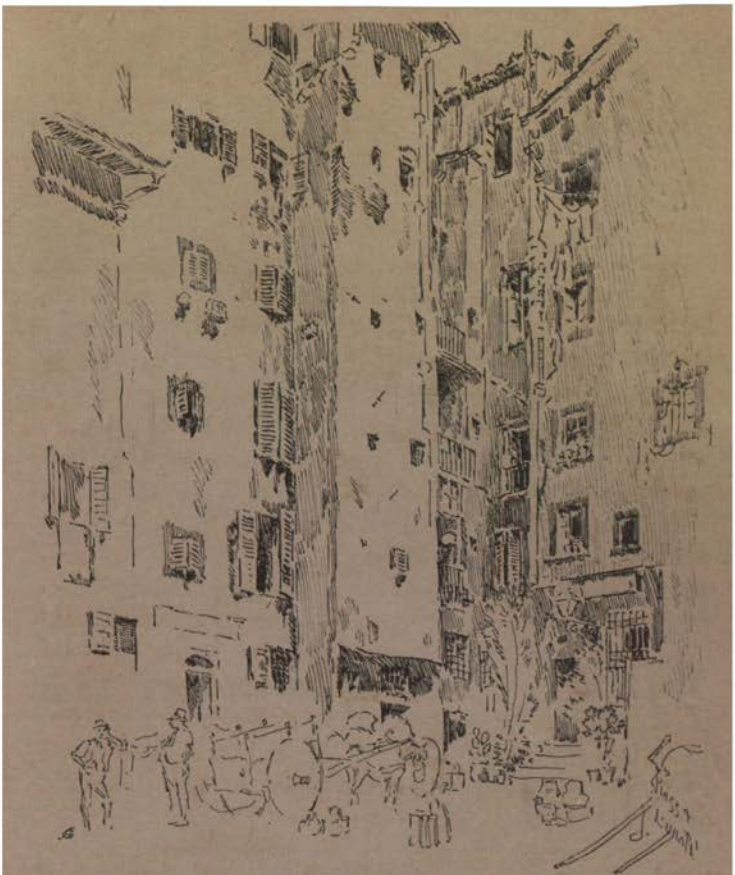
> Io mi son un' che quando
> Amor mi spira noto, ed a quell' modo
> Che dêtta dentro vo significando.

But enough of such praises, which Dante is too great to receive and myself am not worthy to give. I return to Tuscany, and invite you to consider one more quality in his poem invaluable to the traveller, and that is his way of epitomising cities or nations in one figure —pathetic, terrible, monstrous, or lovely, as may be, but standing, not without design, for the fortunes and features of his race.

Epitomes of nations.

Do not suppose yourself above, or below, the need of this. I say you cannot get on without it. There can never have been a traveller in Italy who has not felt the urgent desire to disencumber, so as to be able, just for once, to have the whole vision of some storied place; to see, not the envelope of the thing, but the thing itself quintessentially. Verona, Pisa, Perugia—what does one see when one looks upon such as these? Beauty enough, God knows, of engirdling, blue, and awfully remote hills, of green plains, mulberry trees, garlanded vines, towers like ships' masts; a hint of wild and wicked old history in hiding, of industry unlike one's own—less strenuous apparently, and yet infinitely more strenuous really—of passions and beliefs which one can only wonder at, not share. All this you see at a

glance, but in time something more, so vague and looming, so large as to be distressing. You find



HOUSE OF DANTE, PIAZZA DONATI.

that you want to get the place embodied—like a Virtue or Vice in an old Morality, like a Theological Quiddity in an allegorical fresco; you want, at any rate, to get rid of the effect so that

you may happen and pounce upon the cause. Enough of Verona and the Veronese! Enough of San Zeno and those other great solemn churches, of those balconied palaces and steep bridges, and blue and orange altar-pieces! Let me see Verona herself, that I may understand why it is all so beautiful and why on earth it moves me so much. This is the singular quality of Italy—a land of a people never at one and never at rest, always fine in act, and always distinguished in its presentation—that at every turn of the road, and at every revolution of the centuries, she is able to stab you to the heart. Never say, then, that you can do without Dante; that is all nonsense. If Dante can dress you up the essence of half a hundred nations in half a hundred tragic figures, how the mischief are you to do without him? And that he has done that is certain; and that he did it on purpose is one of the articles of my belief.

Tragic figures of cities: Pisa.

How otherwise is it that Ruggiero and Ugolino stand, and always will stand for Pisa? All the traditional hatred of a Florentine, and all the just indignation of an honest man, are expressed in these two cantos of the *Inferno*, embodied in these two loathsome, fastened figures, and culminate in the scalding invective of the close—

Ahi, Pisa! vitupero delle genti!

Dante has been accused of malice for this terrible business, and I am not about defending him from it. Being a Florentine, he had been more than a man if he had not hated Pisa; and that he was no more than a man is at once our hope and our

justification. But when Landor takes upon himself to belittle one whose knees he could hardly hope to discover, I take upon myself to say that he only belittles himself. "Admirable, indeed," he says (or makes Petrarch say—Petrarch, forsooth!), "is the description of Ugolino to whoever can endure the sight of an old soldier gnawing at the scalp of an old archbishop." Let him scold as he will: undying sin, undying punishment; undying hate in man, everlasting condemnation in God—if such things must be done, it is thus they should be done by him who is able, and not otherwise. Let Landor build up his imaginary dolls' houses where he is and leave the Cosmos to his betters.[1]

Of the many Sienese he treats, it shall be observed that the foolish, the hapless, or the atrociously arrogant, stand out above the rest for emblems of the tragic place. **Siena.** He certainly never concealed his opinion of that nation—

> Or fù giammai
> Gente si vana com' è la Sanese?

I don't think he thought them worth hating; he may have scorned them, perhaps. He gave them a kind of contemptuous pity: a gallant, feather-headed, high-flying, high-sniffing race, and altogether unlucky! So he shows you in a strong light, *not* Provenzano Salvani, who, though he is there, makes little impression beyond pointing the moral of humility; but Sapia,

[1] I think it is worth while to point out that the father of Ruggiero, upon whom, in hell, his guilty victim was fed, had himself been a glutton (24 *Purg.* 29).

who (in her hour of insane triumph) sang, says he, like a blackbird when the fine weather comes—

Come fa il merlo per poca bonaccia—

Sapia, who defied God; Albero, who tried to fly; and in seven of the most lovely wailing lines ever penned by man, La Pia, the helpless, betrayed, unhappy, wedded girl. Here, before Time and Existence, stands Siena.

Who figures the virtues of old Florence if not Cacciaguida with his tales? Who the later, vexed State but Farinata, scornful of hell in hell? Like persons in a Morality they stand for more than themselves, are men as emblems walking. It may be mere coincidence—though I don't believe it—that of the modest-mannered Lucchesi Gentucca, shadow though she be, is the most significant, or that Vanni Fucci, "savage beast," is set up for Pistoja, a little city which did more robbery to the peace of Tuscany than many a bigger one; but it is most certain that in Guido of Montefeltro more than one man's sin—all the violent fraud of the Romagna—is prefigured. And what of Francesca da Rimini? She was a lover, a sinner, and most unhappy: well, and was that all?

Florence, Lucca, Pistoja, the Mugello, Romagna.

It may have been all. But who goes to Ravenna or to Rimini without finding her there, wringing her hands? And who follows the valley road among the bald hills, by Poppi and Bibbiena, and does not call to mind Buonconte, dying in the fog of the wound in his throat? Nobody for certain who has ever read the canto; nor will anybody ever see these

Romantic apprehension.

places aright unless he do read. For of all the gifts in the world meet for travellers, this one of Dante's of *Romantic Apprehension* is the most precious.

I end as I began. Beatrice is not specifically Tuscan, nor is the *Summa* of Saint Thomas Tuscan in any sense; not for such things would I consider Dante now. But he himself, as he expresses himself in his august and piercing music, is the way to Tuscany. All that is specific in that stored plot of earth, all clean thought and tense expression, all passion, all partisanship, all the form, colour, and rhythm of a people who strove after such things (and got them), the art and the artifice, the exactness of knowledge and the thirst for more knowledge—all these things, which all the Tuscans have partaken, are within the covers of the Divine Comedy, essentially and substantially there. It is as true to say so, as it is to say that through Dante alone, and for his sake whom she drove out of her gates, Florence may bear the name of Crown of Tuscany. For assuredly, if Florence begat no greater man, Tuscany never lay in the hollowed hand of a more undoubted Florentine. His parts are all pure Florentine—the high heart, the hawk's eye, the biting tongue, the intolerant mind. In good measure or light every one of his fellow-citizens shared them. And so they do to this day. And as he was all—as in conversing with him you are in touch with what still lives in Florence—so he saw everything there, worth seeing, that we can see. The lines of country, the hills and the valleys, the rivers and the wells, are still what they were

Conclusion of this matter of Dante.

to his eyes: no one knew them better, and no one loved them more. The gaunt great castles you see there, fortresses of Signioria or Podestà or hill-robber, the scarred towers lonely on the mountains, were either weathered, battered, or crumbling when he turned his face to the north. The shining churches were all built or building; what his friend Giotto imagined on the walls of cloister or choir no man after him was to transcend. Of all those strifes and blood-sheddings, which were the fruit of Florence's growing-pains, he was in the quick; he fought at Campaldino, knew of a truth what Corso Donati deserved, heard the passing of the Ordinances of Justice. Minute and curious lover of his land! with the lover's pricking jealousies and the long reveries of the lover, forget for a moment the divine poet and his soothsay, forget the green-eyed girl[1] whom he loved so wildly; and assure yourselves —or believe me—that there is no approach possible to his Tuscany but through his book and in his name.

APPENDIX I

DANTE'S PICTURES

His pictures of Italy are, of course, Italy itself; and if time were as plenty as love, it should be a profitable task to tabulate them.

There would be first his pictures which depend for their effect upon

1. *Close observation of one typical feature*—

> Come le pecorelle escon del chiuso
> A una, a due, a tre, e l' altre stanno,
> *Timidette atterrando l' occhio e 'l muso*—

[1] She had green eyes.

the whole effect being got by observation of that dejected attitude of sheep, which everybody knows, but no one save a close observer would have identified.

Of the same order—the gesture of the blind beggars at church doors in the 16 Purgatorio. Thus he saw Sapia of Siena, standing as

> Se volesse alcun dir, Come?
> *Lo mento a guisa d' orbo in su levava.*

That pitiful, anxious gesture of the blind—who does not know it?

2. Next would come more detailed pictures—such as the stork on the house-top in the 25 Purgatorio—

> E quale il cicognin che leva l' ala
> Per voglia di volare, e non s' attenta
> D' abbandonar lo nido, e giù la cala—

extraordinarily realistic picture, where every word, every syllable counts. Or that again in the beginning of the 24 Inferno—"In quella parte del' giovinetto anno Che il sole i crin sotto Aquario tempra"—too long and too well known for quotation; which, however, in a dozen lines, draws the traveller a picture of the frosty spring morning on the hill side, which, if he knows, gives him a swelling of the heart to recognise, and if he knows not, displays it to him in all its sharp and delicate beauty.

3. Thirdly, there are the scenes which depend upon the touching of a heart-string, so to say—which stir the memory and set that to work picture-making. Of them, I suppose, the supreme example is Nazareth—

> Nazarette,
> Là dove Gabriello aperse l' ali—

a touch masterful and exquisite at once. Like that is the vignette of the delta of the Po by Rimini, which I have already quoted, and that which is equally fine of the Rhone at Arles and the litter of tombs—

> Sì come ad Arli ove il Rodano stagna
> Fanno i sepolcri tutto il loco varo.

Others of the same order give you the birds—

> Come augelli surti di riviera
> *Quasi congratulando* a lor pasture ;

and the lovely picture of the lark—

> Qual lodoletta che n' aere si spazia,
> Primo cantando, e poi tace contenta
> Dell' ultima dolcezza che la sazia.

4. Lastly, as far as I am concerned, for I have no time to elaborate it, there are scenes which depend mostly upon rhythm, assonance, subtle modulations, and choice of words—deliberately confected scenes, like

> Qual esce una volta al galoppo
> Lo cavalier di schiera,

which, to my ear, gives you the staccato, the very pounding of hoofs. Or, for another, take the sound of falling water in green places—

> Li ruscelletti che dei verdi colli
> Del Casentino discendon giuso in Arno,
> Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli.

And if I may choose a final one it shall be of the gathering of rain in the mountains—

> Indi la valle, come il dì fu spento,
> Da Pratomagno al gran giogo coperse
> Di nebbia, e il ciel di sopra fece intento.

Heaven made a tent, in fact ! But to test the extraordinary solemnity, the growing solemnity of all the passage, which culminates in this verse, and after it breaks out of tragic horror into pure weeping, and pity and mercy, that whole canto must be read—the famous 5th Purgatorio.

It is a commonplace of criticism to say that only the highest order of imagination can see such pictures as these in their connection with alien events, and only the greatest art express them ; and it should be another, though I cannot call to mind that it is—that Dante stands alone in Italian literature

in the possession of it, except, I think, for a single example which can be got from Boccaccio. For imagination, in the strict sense, is more than conceiving, inventing, an act or a person outside experience: it is seeing this act or person *in the doing*, and so minutely as to be able to describe him. It is intellectual second sight; it is seeing things which, to us at least, are not there. The example I shall give you from Boccaccio—unique in him, I believe—is of Isabella cutting off her dead lover's head with a knife, "il meglio che potè"—"as well as she could." That is real second sight: he must have seen her at it. That is real imagination. Now Dante, as you know, is full of that. Not to encumber myself with examples—besides those which I have given you just now—I will remind you of two. Bertrand de Born with his carried head, "pesol con mano a guisa di lanterna." And how did St. James and St. Peter greet each other in Paradise?

> Si come quando il colombo si pone
> Presso al compagno, e l' uno all' altro pande,
> Girando e mormorando l' affezione,

which one might think was going further than was convenient with such an august couple, did one not feel convinced of the truth of it.

But there are other pictures to be considered—pictures of travel at large. Never, certainly, was there traveller before or since his day who was able to feel more closely or set down more exquisitely the sensations and emotions, the pains and triumphs, the wonders and terrors, sweet and bitter memories, the longings, the hopes, and the dreams which all travellers have tried to express, from Pausanias the folk-lorist to George Borrow the pedlar of Bibles. Traveller, whether he would or no, but a perfect traveller, inestimably quick to feel, and incurably an observer, Dante is indeed the master traveller, the master guide to Italy; for his poem possesses the three indispensables to a travel-book: it inspires travel, it illuminates travel, and it recalls it.

Weather! How he was sensitive to that! You remember the dust-storm, the whirlwind that "dinanzi polveroso va superbo"? He touches the wreathing fogs, the rain, the frost and snow just like that. Of the last, there is that lovely

reminder of the great idle flakes which drop like feathers on a windless Alp :—

> d' un cader lento
> Piovean di fuoco dilatate falde,
> Come di neve in Alpe senza vento.

And there you have one of a thousand instances of how he uses things he has observed to figure things he has imagined.

Then the time! As a man who must look abroad for it, he naturally knew more of that than we do, who carry it in our waistcoat pocket. There is no poet in literature who has observed so finely upon the hours of the day, and the signals of them—sun, moon, stars, tremblings, thrillings of light, calls and movements of beasts and birds. If one had his eyes one could time oneself exactly by the creatures. There are the rooks for dawn; and the swallows—

> Nell' ora che comincia i tristi lai
> La rondinella presso alla mattina ;

the lizard for noon; and for his evening piece there is the famous passage beginning, "Lo giorno se n' andava"—which equals Shakespeare's "Night thickens and the crow Takes wing to the rooky wood." But all this is familiar stuff; and so, no doubt, are those which record the sensations of the march, which get themselves engraved upon every man's mind: enormous fatigue, wearisome ascents redeemed by sight of the sea or unfolded landscape; the longing for home at certain hours, or called up by certain sounds, bells especially; the delays and indecisions about starting—a most truly observed thing :—

> Noi eravam lunghesso a 'l mare ancora
>
> So stayed we in that sea-bound spot,
> Like folk who, thinking of the march,
> Are all for going, yet go not.

One might drag out a catalogue of these telling strokes of his—of spiritual sensation as well as physical; and I dare not omit one more, the most subtle and penetrative of all—of the traveller who at last faces what he has come out so far to see, some great painted or sculptured church, or Venice, perhaps, nested in the blue water, with spires and domes rising out of

it; and as he looks, frames in his mind the words with which he will describe it all at home :—

E quasi peregrin che si ricrea
Nel tempio del suo voto, riguardando,
E spera già ridir com' ello stea.

I ought to allude also in this place to his power over the sights of the road, over all possible sights,—romantic, shocking, absurd, whatever they may be, castles like crowns, precipices, the cold, dead shadows of trees in high places :—

Un' ombra smorta
Qual sotto foglie verdi e rami nigri
Sovra suoi freddi rivi l' Alpe porta;

blazoned shields on the wall of the Podestà; people—friars walking in single file, a great tournament in a field below the wall, crowds running over a bridge to see a show, a file of hesitating sheep peering down a mountain path; minute particulars of access :—

To Sanlèo up, to Noli down,
To steep Bismantova you must climb
On your two feet——;

the tongue of strangers—how they say "sipa" instead of "si" at Bologna; and I, for one, shall never forget my delight when I really did hear a man say "sipa" there. But there is no end to it! To inspire travel, or to recall it, these homely features of the poem should prove The Great Invitation to the Road.

APPENDIX II

BEATRICE AND OTHER CONCERNS

THIS is not the place to consider the plan of his poem, his great scheme of justifying God's justice, nor his political aims, nor the profundity of his long thought. It is well said by Benedetto Varchi that Beatrice "pronounces a discourse so learned and so subtle, that it would seem impossible that such

and so many things could be confined within so few verses and such simple words." And another justly saith, "Many a time, and rightly, he owns to his impotency to clothe such lofty conceits; but the nobility with which he says that he can say nothing at all is an emblem of sovereignty; nor did ever the poetry of man speak so eloquently of God on high." All this is good and true; but to amplify it, or embroider with quotation, would take me too far. It would bring me back to the beginning of my story where I spoke of his knowledge of his immediate world. For what is strange is just this: with equal precision, with measurements as sure, he knows and can tell the contours and circumstance, the length, and depth, and height of the world *di là*. He travelled, but not far; he read, but not so widely Dr. Johnson. The souls he sees sousing in Hell, the painful initiates on the Mount of Purgation, the white-stoled Convent of Heaven, are gathered from a square of thrice ten-score miles, and represent the memories of a hundred years, or the thumb-marks of a few classics. And yet his grip is so sure, and his scope so wide, you think that you see the whole world under his span. He was in that world, indeed, but not of it. As, when he had reached the eighth starry Heaven, he could look down through the seven spheres—

> E vidi questo globo
> Tal, ch' io sorrisi del suo vil sembiante—

so it had been with him since Love first raised him up. He could hold the spinning thing in his hand; there was no difficulty there. This it is to be a poet, if for once we may restrict the word to some half-dozen men since the fall of Troy, and exclude, for once, Sir James Steuart, Lord Godolphin, and Dr. Atterbury.

But for the machinery of his poem, what you may call its articulations, the parts of the diagram, I have the greatest possible sympathy—the equal number of cantos to each cantica, the happy trick whereby every great stage of the journey ends in hope or vision of the stars. I love the variegated pattern embedded in the Twelfth Purgatory, which is a small thing in itself, or the excess of reverence which will never allow "Christ" to be rhymed to anything but itself

—perhaps a smaller thing—as much as the elaborate apposition of the Virtues and Sins, the whole great scheme of the Purgatory, which is made such a glorious tribute to the Madonna. These things tell me not only that he loved, but that he delighted in his immortal task. From the temper of his mind, as much as from his own words,[1] I should have judged that he planned every curve of the ornament before he set pen to paper, and should not be surprised at any time to learn that he worked out his similes on the same orderly plan. A poet loves to bit and bridle his fancy, to tame the lovely wild thing, and teach it the manège. And, after all, these measured paces are of the essence; and if a sonnet hath fourteen lines, there is good reason that an epic should have fourteen thousand and no more. Let this be remembered also, that artifice, elaborate design, was the great outlet of Tuscan art. The really great men—Giotto, Donatello, Lionardo—had more of it than the smaller fry, in the measure of their greater need. Artifice is the safety-valve of the surcharged heart. So Dante has more than Petrarch, Boccaccio more than Sacchetti; for passion drives them harder. But this and the like considerations are excursions from the way; and so is Beatrice, upon whom I am tempted to linger. That green-eyed enchantress, that vivid, circumspect, alert beauty must needs move one who serves the man who served her.

As for her, signs are not wanting that her nostrils had stirred the quicker for him. Devout and prostrate lover though he were, he could not but observe her truly. Let the allegory-mongers, who would rob her of her twenty years' young blood, consider the Thirtieth Purgatory. Is that the reproach of Theology against Physics? *Via!* And what again of her words to Matelda? "Take him to Eunoë," says she,

> And at thy wont
> Quicken his valour perished half.

Is pique wholly absent? Was Matelda this "altra"? At least, is not Beatrice conscious of magnanimity? I think so.

[1] Compare the end of the Purgatory:—

> Ma perchè piene son tutte le carte
> Ordite a questa cantica seconda,
> Non mi lascia più ir lo fren dell' arte.

Of his own feeling there can be no doubt, for he has suffered none to remain. When she came to him, after that wonderful overture—Matelda, the Earthy Paradise, the mystic Procession (was ever such honour paid lady before?)—when she came to him, I say, in her flame-coloured robe, girdle of olive, and green cloak, before he was worthy to look upon her eyes, what does he say but—

D' antico amor sentì la gran potenza?—

Is this a cry from the heart yearning for theology? Did anything ever move such ecstasy of homage but love? The most subtle passage in the whole of the comedy is perhaps that which lays bare his heart's whole idolatry, where he speaks of

Quella riverenza che s' indonna
Di tutto me, pur per BE e per ICE.

The mere written syllables of the adored name possess and dominate him. He loved this green-eyed girl and, because he loved, freed his immortal part, and towered higher than any of the sons of men. For if our Milton heard God speak, this man dared look Him in the face, take his stand with Saint John and Saint James below the burning throne of heaven, and see his beloved assumed into the very heart of Mary. This it is to be a lover. If he paid more than lover's honour to a green-eyed girl, what did she not do for him? She gave him strength to soar, taught him the mystery of Beauty and Desire, "imparadised his mind." Who she was, or what, whether gentle or simple, maid, wife, or widow, a beauty or a scold, tall or short (I myself believe she was a little woman), it is no matter. She imparadised his mind. He repaid her with such sort as no woman, save the Queen of women, has ever received of man. But she had given him the keys of heaven. It is enough for us to be sure that she was lovely and good, had green eyes, and died young. To which I add for my private contentation—that she was a little woman.

CHAPTER III

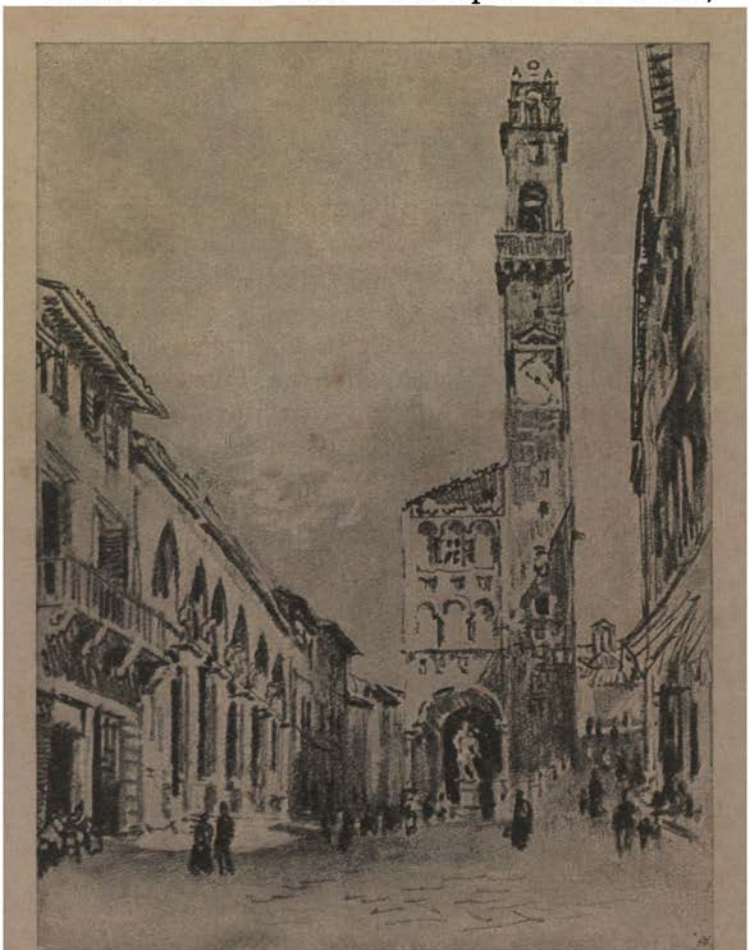
THE HILLS AND THE VALLEYS

HERE, since we are about to embrace the mountains which cut Liguria off from Tuscany, seems the proper place for a little geography. Here, for instance, is a good problem for the traveller, to make good the fact that every considerable city he visits now will be found in the plain, whereas formerly each was on a hill-top. And here, if I had the ripe wisdom of old Dennis, or the orderly pragmatism of Herr Baedeker, would be the place for me to be learned in discourse upon the Etruscans, the Latins, and the Romans. Alas, I am but a roadster with an eye for humours. Sound upon inns and innkeepers, I am to seek in hegemonies and the Lucumons. *Vacuus viator* I stand confessed, vague enough. But if, in M. Renan's phrase, I can "inform my vague," why, then, I shall have done something.

Geographical musings.

The Grand Duchy of Tuscany, speaking roughly, makes an equilateral triangle, whose base shall be the Maremma, running as the Mediterranean lies, from north to south. The angles of the base are the Magra bridge, which

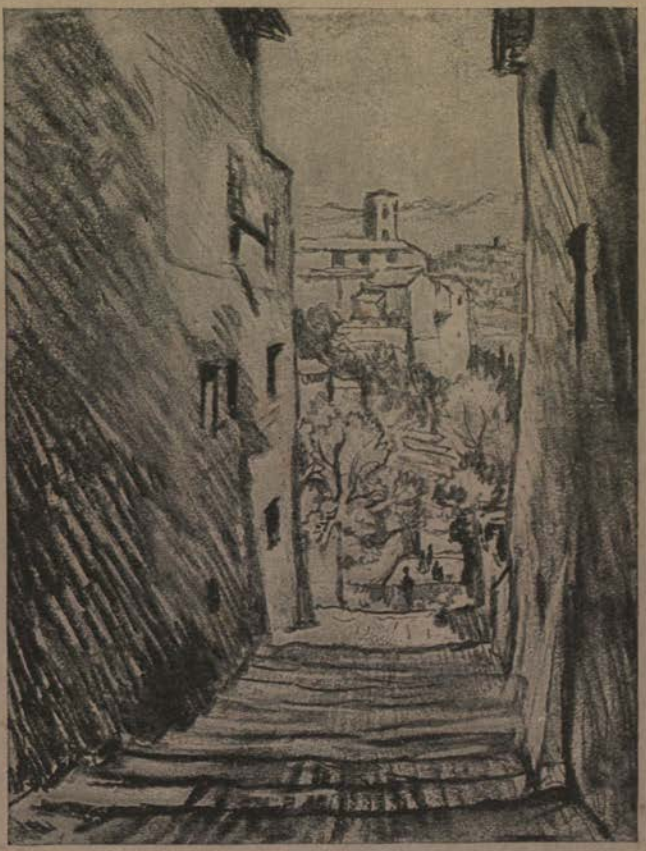
we have crossed, and the Orbetello isthmus, which we are to visit. The apex is La Verna,



THE PIAZZA, MONTALCINO.

above the Casentino. Bisecting the base, more or less exactly, you have the Val d' Arno, which

(with the Val di Chiana) is the only considerable plain in the country. Florence, though it is not the true, is the political middle, since it commands



A STREET IN MONTALCINO.

both road and waterway alike. A captain could hardly take his host from Milan to Rome without coming to terms with the Florentines; nor could

the Aretines reach Genoa. If for no other reason, Florence was bound to get supremacy. So here you have the state of the case. Florence and the best land are in the midst; north and east of her are the Apennines—better outposts could not be. West of her are the sea and a strip of barren, inhospitable, salt-scourged coast. South of her are ridges of limestone hills, parallel as racing waves, with close valleys between them, and in every valley a grey-green languid river. But where Arno runs from east to west, and shapes the plain to her mood, these limestone hills run south to north and the rivers march with them. Among these town-crested waves of rock our course is to be. On every ridge, on every spur or fault of a ridge, you will have a town. All the massed nations of Tuscany were to be found once above the vale of Arno, or upon these southern hills. There were none worth consideration in the Apennines: the Etruscans, when they left the south for the north, kept by the sea. And there are none there now; but for a different reason. The plain has sucked in all.[1]

[1] The sea may well have flowed over Florence once, perhaps, indeed, to Arezzo; but three headlands will have acted as groins and silted up a foothold for a city: these are the Monte Pisano, now by the Serchio made an island of rock; the Cerbaje, islanded also by Nievole; and Monte Albano, which only a narrow pass cuts off from the bulk of the Apennines. A great creek would have run up north to Pistoja and Montagnana; but fishes would have spawned where now the people of Prato and Signa are at work. All this plain, in fact, is reclaimed stuff—alluvial deposit, tidal silt, *detritus*—the work of Ombrone, Nievole, Guanciana, and Serchio, with Arno and Sieve working west from the Gran' Giogo. There the life-blood of Tuscany, as I say, is pooled—Pistoja, Prato, Arezzo, Florence, Empoli, Lucca, Pisa, Leghorn; naming these, you name all that really lives—though in the Val di Chiana there is now a stirring towards birth. Once the gallant blood coursed by every winding valley, by every brook and swamp, from the cities of the hills. That was in a

In the victorious year (1254), when Florence humbled one hill-nation after another, she found Volterra a huddle of old buildings within vast, indestructible, indefensible walls—too big, indeed, for either consummation—Volterra! a chief city once of the Etruscan hegemony. The others were in much the same plight—Montepulciano, Montalcino, Cortona, Massa, Asciano—villages graced like cathedral cities, shadows of great shades. It was not altogether that they had been rent from within; they were derelict, the blood had left them and flowed down to enrich the plain. Siena was the last, which might have gone one of the first; but there was reason in this. Siena, like Florence, held the highway to Rome, and a clean road.

"Who builds rock-cities must himself be rock."

That a man should have built for himself a city upon a hill must be taken to mean that he were content to go tired to his bed, so only that he might be sure to find his wife in it, his children and gear safely embanked about it. In other words, he had been down to that extremity where the shift was to keep his skin whole, rather than to render it sleek by comfort or to adorn it with raiment. Not far removed from the blinking

day when a man brought his stuff to market or the ships on a mule's back, or defended it in his citadel high among the rocks. But that was before history, which cannot reckon the time when Volterra or Chiusi, Ansedonia or Tarquinii, would compare in riches with Florence and Leghorn. In those days Florence and Leghorn were not: in these, where are Volterra and Ansedonia?

> See Luni, Urbisaglia pass,
> And after them how flicker and fade
> Chiusi and Sinigal'—alas!
> When this house makes that house a shade,
> A smoky name, what news is this,
> If cities wreck the state they made?

cave-dwellers, his grandparents, or his great-uncles, the long-toed folk who nested in trees,[1] so built the first founders of the Tuscan Grand Duchy; and so, for reasons of their own, the successive invaders of the land elected to dwell. For, obviously, where there had been safety for the robbed, there would be immunity for robbers. All the cities of the plain—prosperous Florence, coy Lucca, and the rest—were offshoots from these eyries of the rocks, desperately sought and late in time, for the sake of the waterway. Thus, in John Villani's time the Samminiatesi came down from their citadel and built themselves a San Genesio by Arno, imitating so the "antico popolo maligno" who had stocked Florence from the crag of Fæsulæ and prospered in spite of all, as they were bound to do. For it is most certain that a people who would thrive in that rude air would batten on the glebe below. No hoeing in the rocks down there, as the Carrarese must painfully do. That they did thrive history will prove, if a glance of the eye do not.

Dismay came slowly to the hillmen upon the leisurely flood of history; but the temptations to desert their lurking-dens were great. River and level road wash money out on the ebb, to bring it back doubled on the flood. The hillmen, watching from their too quiet citadels, saw markets rise in the low-land country, shipyards afforested, argosies gather, and the waterways fill them in spite of the

Drawbacks.

[1] The mind can form a pleasant picture of the Amsterdamers who, Erasmus says, before they took to pile-driving, lived on tree-tops—like rooks.

ambushed roads. Sale and barter, with the means of buying the one thing needful—which was courage—raised up a new people, to whom the old, be they never so hardy, must in time give place. For this also, in the nature of hill-towns, is not to be neglected, that, built as refuges *from* robbers, they first became refuges

ARNO, FLORENCE.

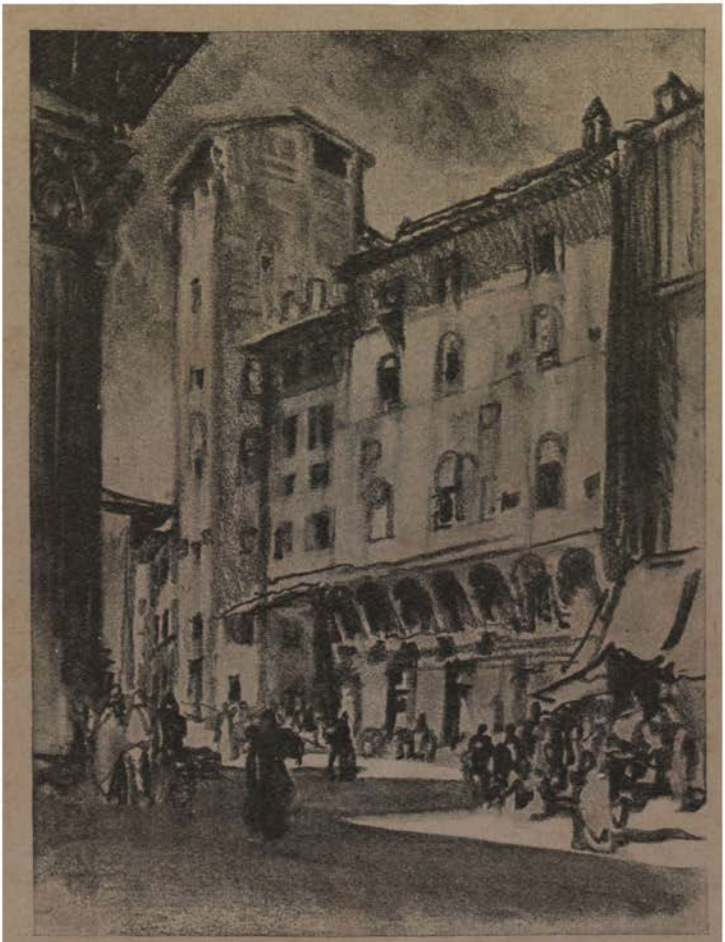
for them, and, next, their traps. By so much as these strongholds were safe, by so much the more they might be dangerous; and if it were hard for the pursuers to get in, by the same token it was not easy for the pursued to get out. One by one the Frankish chiefs, robbers to a man, lords of the hill-towns—Uberti, Ubertini, Ubaldini, Alberti, Aldobrandeschi, Guidi, Pannocchieschi—were prevented in the harms they

did, submitted, and came in to the cities of the plain. Either they were betrayed thither, bribed thither, or (being let alone) starved thither. By the time the Florentines had struck their coin of fine gold there was no hill-nation in all Tuscany which was not either in their power or tending surely beneath it. These things were certainties, in the very nature of the hypothesis.

Characteristics of the remnant.

But now, here also is an obvious thing, that if the ingathering of the upland clans was a Cadmus-sowing for the lowland communes—as no doubt it was, with Guelf-and-Ghibelline wars, Black-and White wars, and endless bedevilment to come out of it—assuredly, also, what was left behind, to push about as best it might upon the bare rocks, was a still hardier seed. Judge them by what they are now: rugged, cold-eyed men, stern-faced women, bearing and nourishing imps of whipcord, they seem to have been. And their tools, and their gowns, their churches and gods, like them, you would have said. And so it is. Not only are the hill-towns of Tuscany the more ancient, but they are the more lasting; they have more character, testify more certainly of themselves. Once seen, the least of them stands up at call, child of a fierce family, with the general carriage of the whole blood—that gaunt hospitality, that offhand welcome, those eyes bare and bold which they all show you; but with a specific aspect of its own, a look unmistakable, a gesture, some trick which singles it out a self-sufficient, responsible entity. "Here stand I, such-an-one, naked and empty upon my crags, content to be so. And you! what's your will of me?" This

is how the Scots appear to us comfortable Englishmen; it is how the hill-men appear to



OLD FLORENCE.

the Tuscans of the plains. It is the way of them all, however differently they may intone it.

There's for the hill-men; and here's for the hill-towns. How they partake of the chances of the ground, enhance them and insist upon them! I shall never see Radicofani again; but it remains for ever in my mind's eye as I saw it last: a pale cone of rock, wrapped deep in a thunder-cloud. While we upon the plain walked in light dust, methought in Radicofani the rain was sluicing the streets. Impenetrable, afar off—another climate was theirs. They were familiar with storms; for storms were brewed before their thresholds. Town and rock were indistinguishable; the rain engulfed all. Town and rock are mostly indistinguishable; it is characteristic of the site that the buildings should lengthen the vantages of the ground; and yet, when you have seen many, you will not be able to say that you have seen two alike. Montepulciano, with one blunt tower, climbs grandly beyond her mountain, and culminates the pyramid with a truncheon of dark red; San Miniato de' Tedeschi clusters about hers behind grey walls, and then shoots up into a single tall shaft, whose mitred crest can be seen from Pisa. And what of Siena, the queen of all the hill-towns? Lovely from every side, from far off she seems to float over her green down like a scarf of cloud; from nearer in the colour of the place strikes you first: it seems pure rose and white, with a pearl-grey dome to give it value, and two towers like wings to lift it up. San Gimignano has a forest of square towers, all the world knows; Asciano has a beautiful cupola; Volterra gives a dull jut forward into the marly wastes, like a headland into a lumpy sea. Cortona is littered down her hill-side like a

disused cemetery—just as the tombs at Arles, "dove Rodano stagna," pied the place in Dante's eye; Massa Marittima winds about hers like a spiral stair, and reaches at last a great square castle upon the crest. And so with all of them, alike in difference: Montalcino, a fringe of building upon a spur of Amiata; Colle hemming a

THE PIAZZALE, FLORENCE.

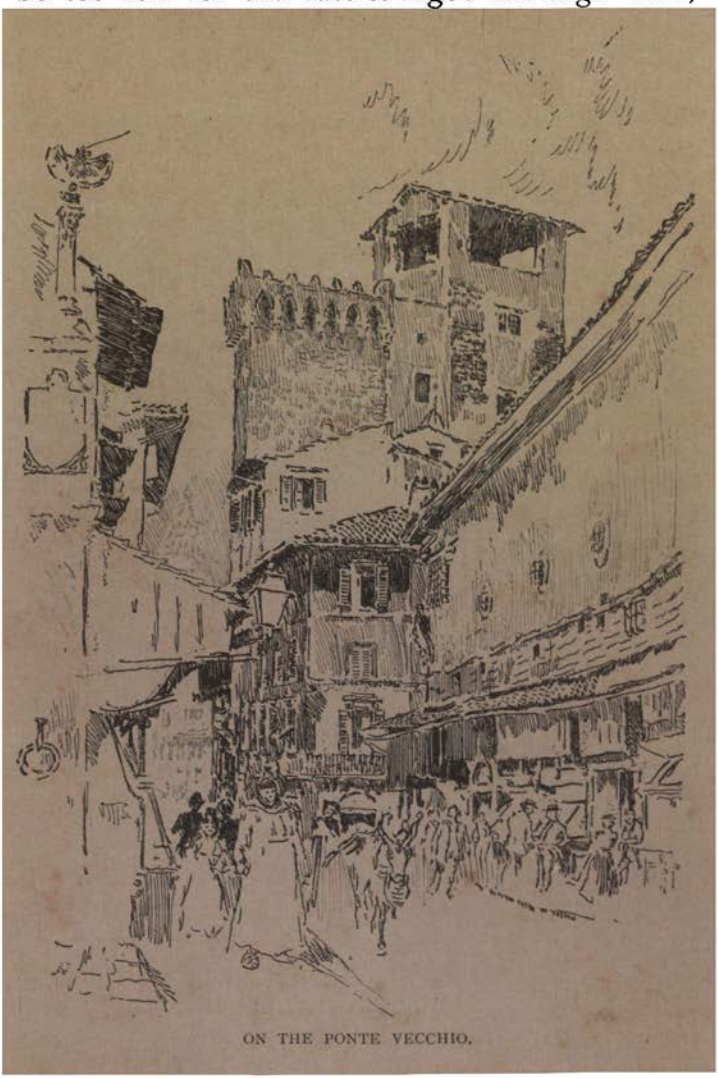
shoulder of the hills with palaces and gateways; and then brown Barga, and then Poggibonsi, and then Certaldo, so ruddy and so blithe—who that has seen them can fail to store them in separate guest-chambers of the mind? A tinge of colour, a scar, a rent in the flank, a bragging tower, a tree like a torn flag, a loggia thrust up like a fault in the rocks, some infallible sign there will be, so that none can ever be mistook. As trees

grow distinctive if they grow apart, so it is with these soaring towns, derelict now and "emptied of their folk," that they have their fate printed deeply in the face, and that their few indwellers have kept the character which made their windy habitations what they are.

The railways pass them by, hugging road or river; the traveller, unless he be of the true breed, is never long in their streets. Their people, it is said, lack civility. Their people are at great pains to be civilised at all; in a question of existence manners are of less account than strong lungs. They have stood, do you see, for ever under martial law, in a state of warfare with an enemy for ever on the move. For they are encompassed with a great air, to which their own lintel, their very roof-thatch may be an ambush. All day long a keen wind blows. Those light horsemen of the storm—scouring rain, sheeted snow, mist that outflanks them and drives them in upon their supports—are never out of the field. So man, woman, and child must keep the walls. Your young man goes cannily to his labour and drags home extended to his bed. Your young lass, shading her untouched bosom, shrouds her filleted hair, neither seeking nor shunning to be admired, watchful only of the weather. You cram your hat about your ears, heedless of her passing; you set about your business, brevity the soul of it. There is no chaffering at ease in sunny piazzas, nor horse-play, nor burnishing of door-posts with the shoulder-blades, nor dalliance with maidens at upper windows. The windows are closed down, and your fingers will

Manners and customs; wind and rain.

be too stiff for the lute-strings: marriage here,



ON THE PONTE VECCHIO.

like all other commerce, is an affair of the

defences. Who will get me children to fight the weather? Let me feel thy heart-beats, my love, before I take thee home. Life here is a campaign, a Spartan business. All these lithe young men and women know *askêsis.* Their *palæstra* are none less than 2000 feet above the level, and are vaulted by the wind-harried sky. Their games are harsh; a man will get, in John Knox's phrase, "a bloody cockscomb" more often than enough; their pageants are blunt and bitter shows, swiftly done and little adorned. Splendour due to the Church! How shall you glorify a God who demands that the candles shall keep alight? Nay, the gods they worship are in their own image. Their Madonna may well have been Scythian Artemis in the beginning—delighting in arrows. Thus it is that the hill-wind scourges the vanities and little pleasant vices out of the hill-towns, where no man of the plains can live long unenrheumed.[1]

Enemies of the plain.

Of these shrill camps, as of their opposites, the more thriving cities of the plain, I shall have to speak in the ensuing pages. Either kind has its peculiar charm; I am the last person in the world to deny the graces of Lucca, the pride of Pisa, or the sweet French allure of these latter days of Arezzo. Nor is it permitted to deny that the lowlands could breed heroes, since Castruccio Castracane was born in

[1] In Siena, to be sure, there is more bravura and more pleasure, but (whatever may be said) little effeminacy. *Molles Senæ:* the term implies the sleekness of the feline; the Sienese were always tigerish in pleasure or pain. Even there, their games are savage, their pageants of flag-flaunting best done in the wind. As for the *Palio*, any plain man who has seen it will agree that it is better to be horse than rider in that clamorous scurry round bare pavements.

Lucca, and Uguccione della Faggiuola in Arezzo; and thence also came Bishop Guido Tarlati, the stormiest prelate that ever swung an axe. Howsoever far the mountain blood of earlier generations may have stiffened the stock of Antelminelli, Uberti, or Visconti, these houses of Florence, Lucca, and Pisa remained to give good accounts of themselves in the plain.

RADICOFANI.

But the plain, as well as the hill, has its peculiar enemies, and has bred men to cope with them. There is, of course, the water, which, streaming from a thousand hills, will raise the Arno in half an hour from a brook in a pebbly beach to an angry flood descending like a wall against the bridges. I myself have seen the river over the Ponte Vecchio. Well, they have dyked and

banked out Arno; they have drained the Val di Chiana, and turned the Val di Serchio into a fruitful market garden. There are good gardeners in those parts, men who know how to shape a tree. But one foe they have against whom they are powerless, before whom they cower and skulk: I mean the sun. He is the great enemy, he and his allies—dust, flies, fleas, pestilence, and a too early maturity. It is the sun's doing that the whole countryside is a bleached, hag-ridden wilderness by mid-June; and under the stroke of him, in the fetid streets, the people slink from one strip of shade to another, and live only by night. Close-barred, blank, and torpid by day, you might be in a city of dead men: the people, pale prisoners, get to loathe the very edge of a ray of light. This is why, in such towns as Florence and Pisa, you appear to be far in the south, whereas in Fiesole or the Garfagnana you are still in the blessed temperate zone. The people are at once languid and dangerous; there is much love and much stabbing. Any day in the week a man may be knifed—or a girl either—in the piazza of Florence: and the reason? Jealousy or despair:[1] love down there can be as cruel as the grave.

Business, too, by which these cities were called into being, has had its effect. You can see that in Ghirlandajo's portraits and in Gozzoli's; you see it still in Bronzino's and Sustermans'. The Florentine is a hard man, the Lucchese a stiff-backed man, the Aretine a restless man; but of this there will be opportunity to speak later on.

[1] The other day, in Grosseto, there was an epidemic of love-tragedies: homicides and suicides: fifteen cases.

Character, character, character must be the cry—character, generic and specific, in a territory which contains a thousand nations. What sets a hill-nation apart from another of the vale? What sets one hill-town apart from another? What stamps a bluff Certaldese girl as different clay from a daughter of San Gimignano, fair, frail, and pleading, yet only five miles away? Why can one never mistake the Roman

The inquiry.

CHIUSDINO.

sternness of Volterra for the accipitrine trick of Siena? Wherein do the Lucchesi differ from the Pisani, and how does one know that some square-shouldered, straight-answering *fattore* comes from San Quirico d' Orcia? Here be questions: to which one answer is that all these several peoples have battled it out among themselves. Only the hardiest and truest to type have come through, those in whom some double portion of their father's spirit has leapt. Like has bred like; hill-man cleaves to hill-woman, and she can abide

in no other man's arms. Nor are there any pillars of salt on the way to the hills, since no wife has ever been tempted thither from the plains.

And now Arno invites, the roads are open, spring calls like a cuckoo over the land. Let those who wish to see Uccellatojo again follow me.

CHAPTER IV

YOU CROSS THE MAGRA—SAVONA TO SPEZZIA, SARZANA, FOSDINOVO

THERE are mulberries in the valley of the Ardèche, but olives in the Rhone valley; and here is one sign for the old-fashioned traveller that he is leaving the pleasantest country in Europe for his affair—France, the one country in a whole continent where the amenities are reckoned a sound investment, and millions a year sunk in them—that he is leaving France, I say, and nearing Italy, the land where people never grow up. Across that noble vale you find almonds, rock-rose, Mediterranean heath, ilex woods, all in flower by May; and little towns—Viviers, Orange, Salon, Aix, Saint-Maximin—very Italian in character, whose high houses have bare holes for windows, whose close streets are always in shade, whose colour is of the drab dust. If it were not that the country remains intensely green, that the agriculture is better—more spacious, more able, better ploughing and better sowing—there are half-hours in the Rhone valley when you might swear you were in Southern Tuscany. At Saint-Maximin

The Rhone Valley.

especially, I remember handsome, blowsed girls gossiping at their doors, children, brown and half-naked, dogs and men asleep together at noon, old folk roasting coffee, sitting at ease in the kennel; colour, too, that most deceiving of all accidents—how these places are weathered like the rocks to a warm brown, and how the Durance, deep, broad, and very swift, repeats the clayey note of all: Tuscan sights! I knew I was near to my desire. But you don't really leave France until you are through Fréjus.

The Esterel, that range of tedious hillocks, of fir-trees and ant-heaps, is of any land; Cannes and the rest of them are what man and his wicked lusts have chosen them to be—Rue de Rivoli, Hurlingham, Maidenhead, Aix-les-Bains, Wiesbaden, Homburg: here, no less than in the Riviera, modern Israel has set up its gods, and I declare it is hard to tell one house of Rimmon from the other. I desire to speak with respect of what affords yearly gratification to a number of rather respectable persons; but if this once famous road is still beautiful, if Nice is a fine city, if new Cannes is an improvement on old Cannes, why, I am egregiously wrong. But what is left of that ancient seaport seems to me to be as good as it is Italian: a yellow and white town clustered about two battered towers upon a hill, the remains of an old anchorage and quay, fishing-boats in shape like triremes, purple-brown sails stretched to dry—all these are excellent good things, not to be exchanged for a wilderness of palm-trees, nor for all the roses withering in the dust above glaring villa-walls. Nature is strong and masterful

The Cornice and the Riviera.

when her limit of endurance is reached; but the

IN THE HEART OF THE MOUNTAINS, CARRARA.

Riviera is still endeavouring to earn its tidal wave, and in the meantime trash, vulgarity, and dust

make even the roses an eyesore, and even the orange-flowers to stink.

This Ligurian sea-board declares itself to be Italy, and above all North Italy, by that specious building which all Italy loves, but none so well as they between Alp and Apennine; that kind which pretends—and proves—that anything may be done upon high ground with plaster and a little water-colour. By these means pasteboard churches look like heavenly habitations, of shining white marble, porphyry-veined; by these means the architects of great Milan made the world gape at the matchless fantracery of their roof; by these means a man having no pretty daughter at home, or no window for her convenience, painted both window and beauty looking forth from it, and thought everything very well. I can admire the gaiety of the performance without commending it as fine art. A naked, brick-red Bacchus astride a barrel, with naked boys to hold garlands about him (and make matters worse by affecting to conceal what indeed they do not); the Saviour of the world, as a child on his mother's knee; a frieze of fighting centaurs; sphinxes, torches, hermæ, cornucopias, Daphne, tuneful Apollo;—one or all of these portents painted upon the outside of your house furnish evidence that your convictions are more humane than mine, whatever there may be to say of your taste. For they show that you have found out that it is worth your while to spend money upon ornament; they show that art is not a luxury for the rich, but rather a necessity for all. This belief the Ligurians share with most of the Italian nations, and with the French nations.

Ventimiglia to Alassio.

Like their eastern neighbours, the Venetians, these builders of Liguria have been strongly affected by the barbarians. The belfries of their churches are minarets, slim shafts of whitewashed brick or rubble; very often they are finished with a cupola like the bud of a tulip; very often they gleam with green, blue, yellow tiles. And to carry the semblance further, if you will let your fancy play with the notion, you will see that the little towns with which this shore is strung—until the white long road from Mentone to Rapallo seems like a chaplet—are but *khans* or *kasbahs*, all of one piece, all for one great household; whose covered streets are the corridors, whose piazzas are the courts wherein live the women, the eunuchs, the janissaries, and

Ligurian building.

THE ROAD TO BOLOGNA.

the great Bashaw himself. Add to all this oriental impress the gay façades, all the gimcrackery of which I have spoken above, and you have the Ligurian sea-board which once boasted Genoa for its culmination, but cannot now.[1] At least it cannot boast so to me, who have seen Savona.

This ancient Ligurian city possesses—with an accent, so to speak—all that distinguishes all the rest. It has a port, with citadel and lighthouse to overlook it; arcaded piazzas, streets with upper galleries across and across, garlanded all with geraniums; painted houses, also, of the happiest, most ridiculous and most touching exuberance. Nothing more elaborate can be conceived; it is like a formal garden. If the reader can recall Crivelli's vision of a galleried city—it is in his little *Annunciation* in the National Gallery—where the ornate house-fronts are bound together by bridges (the street, in fact, being treated as a Venetian canal), he will discover Savona to be its counterpart, if it is not its original. Then, cheek by jowl with this stately economy of the land, is the litter of the marine: the dirty, crowded little harbour, the shipping and the sea. Here you have streaked water, peacock green, oozy posts barred black and white, feluccas,

Savona.

[1] On Evelyn's journey, nothing, I think, impressed him more than Genoa. The site and aspect of the town—"never was an artificial scene more beautiful to the eye"; the "sudden and devilish passion of a seaman"; San Pietro d' Arena with "the ravishing retirements of the Genoese nobility"; the mole of the harbour, of which he says, "Of all the wonders of Italy, for the art and nature of the design, nothing parallels this." Here are some of the wonders he saw. As late as Dickens' tour, too, Genoa held her old pride. Nearly all of this is gone now. I saw the place again this year, after an interval of twelve. One hardly knew it. Gray, by-the-bye, considered Genoa "amiable"—a phrase of excessive urbanity.

galleys, caravels, barques, and brigantines; the rock of the citadel, the lighthouse, an ancient belfry with a cupola, shapely and tall old houses —all impending, crazy and wild: a fine savage effect. Liguria has not anything to show more fair than Savona.

Once past it, once past Nervi, where you can breakfast with ease and no great loss of pence, you reach successively Chiavari and Sestri, two fine long towns of a narrow street apiece; but between them—just beyond Chiavari—you cross a certain river which no reader of Dante can see unmoved. It is the Lavagna, whence the blood of a certain Pope took its boast.

After Genoa.

> Intra Siestri e Chiaveri si adima
> Una fiumana bella, e del suo nome
> Lo titol del mio sangue fa sua cima—

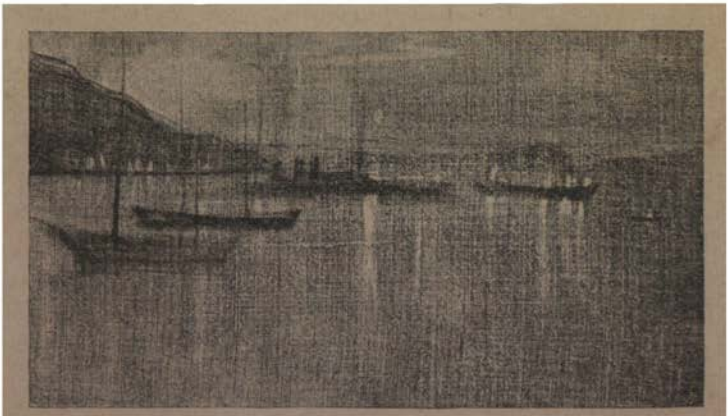
says Pope Adrian VI., whose family were Counts of Lavagna. Terrific verb—*adima!* but it must refer to what goes on amid the wooded spurs above; for here, where the road crosses, the Lavagna rolls a broad and comfortable course over pebbles and beneath the great bridge, and soon comes to terms with the sea. It is, however, to be said that the traveller by road has opportunity more than enough to judge the length of Lavagna's leap from the rocks. As soon as he is out of Sestri he must address himself to the Apuan Alps, and toil circuit after circuit of steep ascent to the famous pass of Bracco. It is called 2014 feet in the books, but must be more certainly 3000. Up that and through that your carriage must go, as best may be; and the odds are short

but that you will be, as I was, in the clouds. Out of summer, sunshine, and the drone of bees one went into a driving mist; one groped for the way, one fought for it; and one emerged into the lovely blue again, with the sea in full sight, and Spezzia locked in its bay, far below, and the great ships at rest there. Midway your climb, if you will rest upon a parapet, you gain a broad view of the Apuans across a gulf, which runs down sheer from your feet into a tossing tide of green growth. Beyond it, as it were, buttressed by shoulders of rock, the mountains rise to snowy altitudes, to clouds and blue isolation; but below that line they are very brown in colour, seamed and deeply fissured, winking in heat. One little grey mountain village perches on a bluff; over the long interval you may hear the bell for vespers calling softly. There is nothing else to make you mindful of man and his makeshifts—nothing else but rock and sky.

The exile.

So you may think, or so thought I, until, resting there, I was aware of a solitary, painful traveller, who, straying down the road by which I had still to climb, paused for comfort and conversation. A brown old French outcast he proved to be, shoeless, tattered, wounded in the feet, but extraordinarily mild of aspect. In truth, half his wits had been baked out of him by savage suns; and though he had a wild and wandering eye it was entirely harmless —a roe's eye half startled, half confiding. A staff in one hand, he carried in the other a very small pannikin of spring water, most of which was spilled by a trick he had of gesticulating with the hand that held it. He offered me of it, but I

could not deprive him of the poor dregs. Ile de Bourbon had burned him up; he knew Trafalgar Square (his bed-chamber, I fear, for some dripping nights); Germany, Spain, Italy from thigh to toe. Nothing but a sunstroke had kept him from Greece, and no deprivation in his life, said he, had affected him more. To have seen Athens, now! Ah, what a city! So he sighed, raising his horny hands, not in rage or despair, but



SPEZZIA.

gently always, and as if with some sense of quiet irony. A simple and wildered old Ulysses,—his name was Lujarric,—it seemed as if his mind was now on its travels, still doing what his poor body had worn itself out over trying. Sunstruck at Ile de Bourbon, drenched in Trafalgar Square, wandering now over the Bracco, dreaming of Greece, Athens and Thebes!

Not that he had not worked as he journeyed; far from that. He had his certificates of employment from half a hundred masters, and showed

me them all neatly pasted into a *cahier*. He had been a soldier in his day, in the *Chevaux Legers*. I thought he might have cheered the Emperor. Later, a coachman, then a teamster, I understand, always with horses until he lost his nerve. Now, he said, that being gone, he was about to embrace the profession of mendicancy. Undaunted old patron of a pair of wounded feet! to enable him to die upon the road, as I am sure his desire was, he would commence beggar! I passed half an hour of talk with him; he spilt all his spring water; I started him upon his new career; we saluted and went our ways—he down to Genoa, I to Spezzia.

Of Spezzia I have no more to say than this, that it prospers and fills you with an agreeable sense of prosperity. It is full of pleasant shade, of grass, and good houses; it has an admirable, old-fashioned inn, called the Croce di Malta, and a head waiter in it exactly like Colonel Newcome. But all this need detain you no longer than it did me, for being all agog for Tuscany, I did but dine and sleep at Spezzia. Missing then the way—I or my driver—we had to climb a hill to get back into the Sarzana road; but, by so doing, made Pitelli, a handsome village, and had a prospect of Lerici, where Shelley, with Keats and Sophocles in his jacket pockets, got himself drowned. Pathetic memory of the man seems to make the pines dreamy down there; and strange memory assails one of the scene, half mummery, half earnest, which was enacted over his wet remains. Here, on a woody peak jutting into a sea more than common blue, they

The Magra.

raised the smoke of sacrifice. Here the *cor cordium*—or, by the account, all but that—became earth of the earth. Fine, cocksure spirit! here by means of fire he too attained certification of a thing or two of which, perhaps, he had been too sure in his day. His views of Italy and the Italians, I take this place to say, were as distorted as those others of his concerning the Christian religion, the British constitution, and similar establishments.

A great river, broad and blue, is that which

> per cammin corto.
> Lo Genovese parte dal toscano.[1]

Short it may be, and they call it the shortest in Italy; but it receives two tributaries before it embrowns the sea, and has a delta three miles broad. Pause on the bridge, on the dividing line between Liguria and Tuscany, for the prospect and retrospect alike are fair. Behind you see Tribbiano, blocked on a high spur, with a pink church and the ragged side of a castle. Over the river before you, are Sarzana, the Apennines, and all the Tuscan demesne. In the Grand Dukes' days there was a frontier post here, with a dogana amid-bridge, and sentries posted along the banks. Anxious gentlemen, like the Cavaliere Casanova, could not breathe comfortably till they were on one side or the other; and the side on which they could breathe happened always to be the other. Now, be our

[1] Fazio degli Uberti, too, has a fine verse about this river :—

> Io vidi uscir la Magra dalle fasce
> Del giogo d' Apennin, ruvido e torbo,
> Che dell' acque di Luni pur si pasce.
> *Dittamondo*, iii. 6, 10.

occasions what they may, there is neither solace nor tension for them on Magra Bridge. Nobody was in sight but a sand-carter, whose patient oxen winked their eyes as they stooped to the yoke, and a few boys at bathing, who gathered about the carriage and wondered at the strange person I was. They were very pleasant lads, answered all my questions, even ventured a few of their own. When we started they ran a few dozen yards into Tuscany with me, in gay emulation of my career. Tuscan or Genoese, all's one now.

Sarzana.

If I had lit upon the thriving little Sarzana first of all the cities of Tuscany, I should have admired more than I did. But the first of them that ever I saw was Pistoja, and Pisa was the second. Having held up my hands in such sanctuaries, I can't sing *Nunc Dimittis* in Sarzana. It is Tuscan, and good Tuscan of its kind: an oblong white church, with a striped marble façade, square stone belfry relieved with marble pillars in its windows; arcades in some of the streets; some poor Della Robbia ware. Such things there are in the *Chiesa Grande* and streets about it. There is also a finely coffered wooden ceiling in this church — *seicento* work and the colour of an old fiddle. It is more inspiring to reflect that Castruccio Castracane must certainly have heard Mass here; that he buried Guarnerio, his infant son,[1] in San Francesco hard by, and that he

[1] Herr Baedeker impulsively says that Castruccio himself was buried in San Francesco of Sarzana. He was buried in San Francesco of Lucca. The Sarzana tomb has the effigy of a *bimbo* upon it, and a rhymed inscription which begins,

Principis est natus Guarnerius immaculatus.

This settles it.

built the fine *Fortezza*, which the enterprising may reach by half an hour's walk from the walls. For the rest, I saw Sarzana in a blare of sun and white dust; and having eaten reasonably well at the Albergo di Londra, went my way into the highlands. For I had seen Fosdinovo, dim in heat, upon the exact top of a mountain, and was determined to go its way to Pistoja, a crow's line over the Garfagnana, whose lords were the Malaspina, until Castruccio made himself lord over them.

Over a spiral road which, at one point, may be 2000 feet above the sea, this little walled town, with its huge castle filling one whole angle of the plateau, hangs like a pinnacle of the rock upon which it stands. You must go about it and about some three times or four, and have the denizens' eyes upon you through the whole of your painful progress, and see the denizens' elbows firm upon the walls. I will not say that from here, better than anywhere else in Tuscany, you can gauge the difficulties of bygone besiegers, because there are five score hill-villages as good. But Fosdinovo is singularly complete; its walls are perfect, its castle at least body-perfect, its gates remain, and there is no more of a road in now than there was when Castruccio entered a conqueror and sent the Malaspina in chains down to Lucca. However, they had it again the moment he was dead; and, in his absence, it is easily seen that they had, and they have, the place under their thumbs. There was no entry into the Garfagnana from Spezzia save this; and there was no entry here unless the Malaspina chose. From the keep of the castle

Fosdinovo.

you have a fine view; the whole delta of the Magra, Spezzia and Porto Venere, like two cusps of a horn, the site of vanished Luni; to the north Carrara, Tendola, a score of other upland strongholds. A great fief for the Malaspina, who were a Lombard race, I believe, allied with Visconti and Della Scala. Moroello, Franceschino, Corradino—here are the names of three of them, brothers, who nominated Dante their proctor to make a peace for them with the stark old Bishop of Luni. On this account, or another, the great man has nothing but praise for them. He meets Corrado, you will remember, in the Eighth Purgatory, and gives him a brave panegyric.

The castle—very much like other castles, of course—is a roomy stronghold, with all its courts, galleries, guard-rooms, battlements, and grass moats intact, so far as can be seen. The present Marquis has repaired it with a good deal of judgment, and has managed to secure comfort for himself without giving discomfort to the instructed traveller. I mean that he has been content to be without artificial light, hot-water apparatus, dinner lifts, and the like; he has regarded a mediæval castle as such, and residence in it as a fact appealing almost wholly to sentiment. I don't admire the frescoes which record the honours of his ancestry, and could have wished that he had left the walls as they were, with the blushes of older and better stuff upon them. But his tapestries are magnificent. The village is a melancholy labyrinth of passages, caverns, rat-holes, dog-holes. A chance sight of an interior through some close entry or another went near to sicken me. Yet here, for reasons which cannot

be guessed—except that they are too poor to live anywhere else—herd the people of the Marquis, *sua gente*, as he would say; and what they live upon in this sharp air, upon this bald peak of rock, only God and the Marquis know, and possibly only God cares. But I suppose He is vowed not to interfere.

APPENDIX

CASTRUCCIO IN THE LUNIGIANA

Castruccio first interfered in the affairs of the Lunigiana in 1317, when he definitely broke with his first patron, Uguccione della Faggiuola. In that year Uguccione, with the help of Can Grande of Verona, made a sudden descent into Tuscany, pushing direct for Pisa. Here was Castruccio's chance. He made a league with Count Gaddo and the popular party in Pisa, and, while Gaddo manned the city walls, marched into the hills against another ally of Uguccione's, the Marquis Spinetta Malaspina. Villani says shortly that he took from him Fosdinovo, "a very strong castle," and Veruca and Buosi, "and made a desert of all his lands." Spinetta took refuge—as the fashion seems to have been—with Messer Cane della Scala, in Verona.

In Verona he must have lurked until 1321. By that time Castruccio was deep in war with Florence on his eastern, and Genoa on his northern march. Malaspina chose his moment—when the Florentines were in the Lucchese, actually investing Montevettolino—entered the Lunigiana from the Modena road, and got back some castles (not, I think, Fosdinovo). Castruccio, whose rapidity never failed to astound the Florentines, got levies from Lombardy, from Pisa, and Arezzo, raised the siege of Montevettolino, and drove his enemies back into Monte Albano. On the night of the 7th June he came up with them, but they declined battle and decamped in the dark, leaving all their fires alight. Castruccio pursued,

took Fucecchio,[1] Santa Croce, Castelfranco, Montopoli, Vinci, Cerreto, wasted the country, and went home to Lucca. He was in no sort of hurry for Malaspina, nor had any need to be, for all fell out as he had calculated. The Florentines recalled their men from the Lunigiana; the Marquis must fight his own battles. But he did not, or could not. Castruccio went up in the autumn (September 1321), and all was his again; and again Cane of Verona received the Marquis.

[1] But he lost it again. He was never able to hold Fucecchio.

HOUSE OF ROMOLA, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER V

THE GARFAGNANA—ROSARO, LIMA, SERCHIO, FIVIZZANO TO PISTOJA

THE Lunigiana implies that western slope of the Apuan Alps between Monte Sagro, Monte Pisanino, the Cuccù Pass, and the sea. Luni lies on the shore, buried deep in sand. Then the Garfagnana begins—Fivizzano is the gate—and runs north-east as far as Monte Cimone, and south-east to San Marcello. There one enters the Pistojese. It is a strange thing that all the living poetry of Tuscany is massed upon these ridges and those of the Mugello, the country whereby the Apennines tend to the Adriatic. It is by a pleasant upland landscape of chestnut woods (climbing to the snows), olive gardens, pergolas of vines, that you are embraced when you are beyond reach of Fosdinovo and all those stony holds; having topped the Cuccù and left a flint-strewn road to Massa Carrara on your right hand, you must descend sharply and ascend again to gain Fivizzano. There are rivers to coast and to cross, small streams mostly, but one considerable—the Rosaro, to wit. a torrent of pretence, upon which Soliera

To Fivizzano.

stands well—which look like holding trout, and in April, no doubt, do hold them. But when I was there it was May; the flood-water was all gone, and with it, I suspect, the fishes. I did not wet a fly.

I was interested to see the Garfagnanesi, for reasons which I have described in the last paragraph. They are handsome, particularly the lads and maids—brown, shy-eyed girls, and thin boys who grow up to be keen, graceful striplings. They are of a sort who, when they are old, are beyond measure hideous and pitiful. I saw one such, a crone chattering madly to herself, half-naked, by a ditch; a withered, scald-headed, shrunken atomy she was, who shook a chopping finger at me, gibbering as I passed. And it was grim thinking that those rosebuds and slips of beauty whom I had seen in glades of the woodland must needs turn into such. They are like their own country: in the morning it is green and groweth up; but the summer is over before May is done, and the rest is as bleached and bald as an old skull afield. Than their spring nothing can be more gracious, fuller of freshness, hope, and promise. These are they, then, who sing like nightingales when love dawns for them, who lisp, indeed, in numbers. A hundred times upon this one day's journey did I see Beppino in the fields—him who, even now, as he broods, leaning on his staff, may be singing of his beloved,

> L' acqua del mar ti mantien fresca e bella
> Come la rosa in sulla verde spina;
> Come la rosa in sulla verde rama,
> Giovine bella, ti vorrei per dama!

And Maddalena also I saw — with a copper cruse upon her proud young head — her who, as she goes swaying up the hill-path, is chanting to herself,

> Mamma, se non mi date il mio Beppino,
> Vo' andar pel mondo, e mai più vo' tornare.

This sempiternal couple, who make love songs

CASTELNUOVO DI GARFAGNANA.

about each other! at Tendola I saw them, at Soliera, Ceserano, Fivizzano. For—and I repeat it—here in the Garfagnana, and right across the Apennines to Pistoja, and thence into Muthegello, all young people are poets when they love, and at no other time at all. And if it is objected to me that all young people of every age and clime are poets too, I reply that these Apennine

children are explicitly poets, with a severe technique, a complicated prosody, an expressiveness of manner, a style which Petrarch, remarkable lover, could not better. What poets they are, and how they are and have been (Dante apart) the only true poets of Tuscany, I intend to declare.[1] Here I do but record as a fact—and there is none more interesting to be recovered in all the country—what I shall make good in the proper time. And in these leafy places I saw them walking, keeping sheep and pigs, climbing after their goats. Small wonder that, with them for my angling, I let the trout go by. In the Garfagnana you may go fishing for poets.

A friendly little hill-town is Fivizzano, utterly solitary upon a spur of rock, surrounded by the live green of a particularly beautiful valley. Neither for quire nor for cloister is it anyways famous, nor for castle of the Malaspina, nor palace of the people. Men have been born and have died here since the days of the Samnites without attaining to a monument in Santa Croce. I except Giovanni Fantoni—"the Italian Horace"—whose name in poesy was Labindo. He was of the society of the Arcadians, and if marble nymphs do not droop somewhere over a slab inscribed with his name, there is little in such titles as these. I have seen none of his works and wonder if they be extant—Fantoni, the Italian Horace, the Labindo of the Arcadians! There is no more to report of Fivizzano but the memory of this poet, and the truth—which is that it has a great and good inn, Albergo della Posta, kept by a diligent and hospitable man; and kept

Fivizzano.

[1] In the last chapter of this book.

by him alone, for I saw neither man-servant nor maid-servant in the house, and it is certain that, as he served up the dinner, so he had also cooked it. He made the bed, he cleaned the boots, he answered the bell, he made out the bill, and went across the road to the post-office to change a 25 *lira* note. And throughout these incessant activities he was able to maintain a

CASTELNUOVO DI GARFAGNANA.

cheerful conversation. God bless the man, he gave me a *salone* and a bedroom *en suite* worthy of a prince's person—and by a prince's person veritably enjoyed. A marble tablet over the wash-hand-stand records that the Magnificence of Leopold II., Grand Duke of Tuscany, repaired to my bed, below the barrel-roof of my bed-chamber, after having paced the long, tiled floor of my *salone*, while the Fivizzanesi treated him to music from

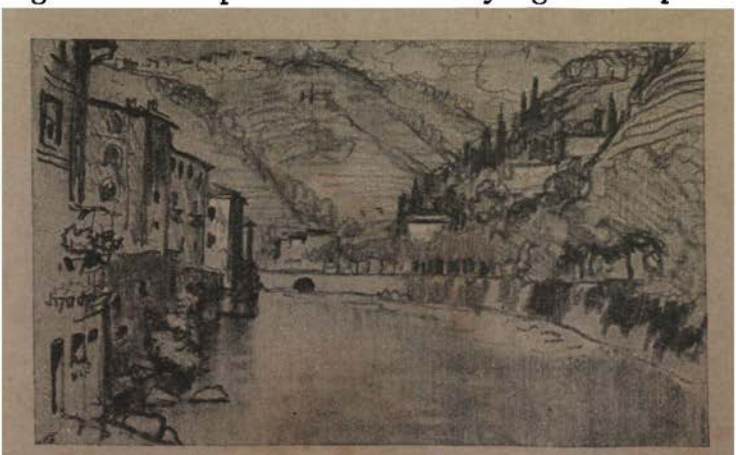
the painted gallery. Here is the tablet, as nearly as I can remember it :—

Upon The Walls
of
This Apartment
in which
The Magnificence of Leopold II.
Grand Duke of Tuscany
DEIGNED TO REPOSE
For Two Nights
The Brothers Fossati of Fivizzano
In Order that Their Posterity
May Make Themselves Worthy
Of a House
Ennobled by the Presence of so Splendid a Guest
Q. M. P. F.

There is very little trace of history—I mean battle-and-murder history—to be seen. The walls, built by the Malaspina, battered by Castruccio, and strengthened by Cosimo Primo, remain; these and the gates. The fountain in the midst of the Piazza, where women come and go all day long to replenish their copper pots, was erected at the costs of Cosimo III.; the collegiate church carries his pills escutcheoned over the portal. Within is little but whitewash and poor altars. Homely pursuits, primeval habits—early hours, a little gossip, sleep at noon, water-drawing, wood-hewing; love, for the young; a little shrewd comment for the old; a masterful Proposto who knows everybody's business and how it ought to be done; a portly hero of the emigrant ship, home from the Transvaal, with English ways and a pocketful of money—here are the day's, the week's, the year's round at Fivizzano.

The little place is, as I say, the gate of the Garfagnana, which opens upon you from the Carpinelli Pass. From this height you look down upon the valley of the Upper Serchio (Lucca's river), with the Apuans behind you and the Apennines before. But to reach Piazza al Serchio you must work painfully about the sides of Monte Pisanino, a giant with a presence like the Jungfrau's upon

The Apuans and the Apennines.



BAGNI DI LUCCA.

him, and what looks uncommonly like a snowfield upon a neighbour height over against him. To do that your first valley of ascent is that of the Rosaro. The *col* of the Carpinelli is at the head of this burn, itself being some 2500 feet. Here you get the character of the Apuans—very different from their colleagues over the valley—genuine Alps, with a fretty edge as sharp as a cross-saw's, with crevasses and aboriginal cascades of snow, and no vegetation worth the name after a certain

level. But below that level they are extremely lovely. I saw chestnut woods as golden as heights in fairyland, stretching glades of oak and heath, than which nothing could lure one more sweetly to stray. Such things there are at walking distance—and above them, grim and isolated, freezing in the flawless blue, are crags and pinnacles which to scale may mean lonely death.

Then, so soon as you are round Monte Pisanino, and have the source of the Serchio, or rather its junction with another torrent, below your feet, you get the Apennines in fair view and can contrast the two systems. Certainly the scenery becomes softer, the peaks no longer gloom, or I rave. They are clothed with verdure from base to point, some with pine, some with scrub, some even with chestnut. The fields are all pink and yellow; when I was there the acacias, which I had seen dropping their blossoms down on the sea-level, were just breaking into flower. There was a verdant, sunny, Swiss aspect over all; out of the live air one expected momently to hear the musical call of a cowherd, the tinkle of goats' bells. Need I remind the reader that it is the country of such things, a country of shepherds and shepherdesses who, in the green and shady intervals of their pastoral cares, have leisure to make love and verses? Shall I tell him again that here Poesy still walks handfasted between lad and lass? Whether I bore him or not, he has it for what it is worth; and I will add this, that the beauty of the adolescent Garfagnanesi—girls, boys, and heifers—is not to be described. It lieth not in feature or form, it is not all a matter of hue and contour. There is in it a

FIVIZZANO.

momentary something, a something arch and starting at once, something which peers like a mouse and invites like a cat; a softness, a columbine allure—I begin to coin adjectives—it seems to reside in quick and graceful motions, in kind, flying glances: how the deuce is one to put it, when it is as fleet as a summer cloud?

After circuitous descents, many and perilous, you find Piazza al Serchio to be a parapeted amphitheatre with a great, curved bridge and a mill midway. Leaning here to rest, you can see that fine river rush green and foaming out of the rocks. Fazio's phrase would recur to the mind did not Dante provide a better—

Piazza al Serchio, Castelnuovo.

> Rimbomba là sovra San Benedetto
> Dell' alpe, per cadere ad una scesa,
> Ove dovria per mille esser ricetto

he says of the Montone in the Mugello. *Rimbomba là!* Thus comes the Serchio with a thunderous uproar.

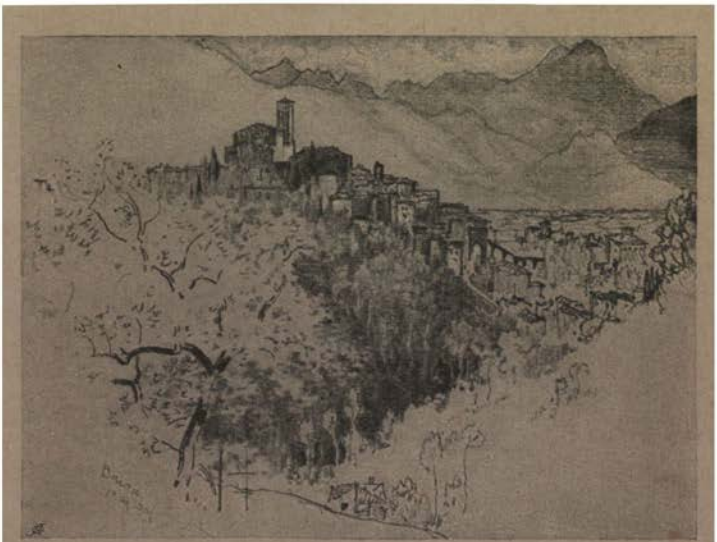
From this point—Piazza al Serchio—you sweep down and down, always following Serchio's leaping motions. Snugly upon the river, round a half-moon which it makes for itself, a nest in the bosom of green hills, lies Castelnuovo di Garfagnana, a fair and ample, bridged town, where Ariosto is said to have stayed as Commissary-General for Este of Ferrara, his master.[1] You can see his house—half a fortress, half a

[1] The Castelnoveschi gave themselves over to the Este family in the fifteenth century, sickened of the chopping of nations in the Val d' Arno. They had been serfs in their time of Pisa, Florence, Lucca, and craved a settled tyranny. The Este held Castelnuovo until the French invasion. The Medici never had it.

decent official residence—with a little piazza of its own, and a look-out tower commanding the road which winds northward into the hills. Other monuments there may be, but I could see none.

At the inn, where I was waited upon by a woman more beautiful than any who can be now ministering to Mahomet—the young wife of my young host—I found a

The Revenant.



BARGA.

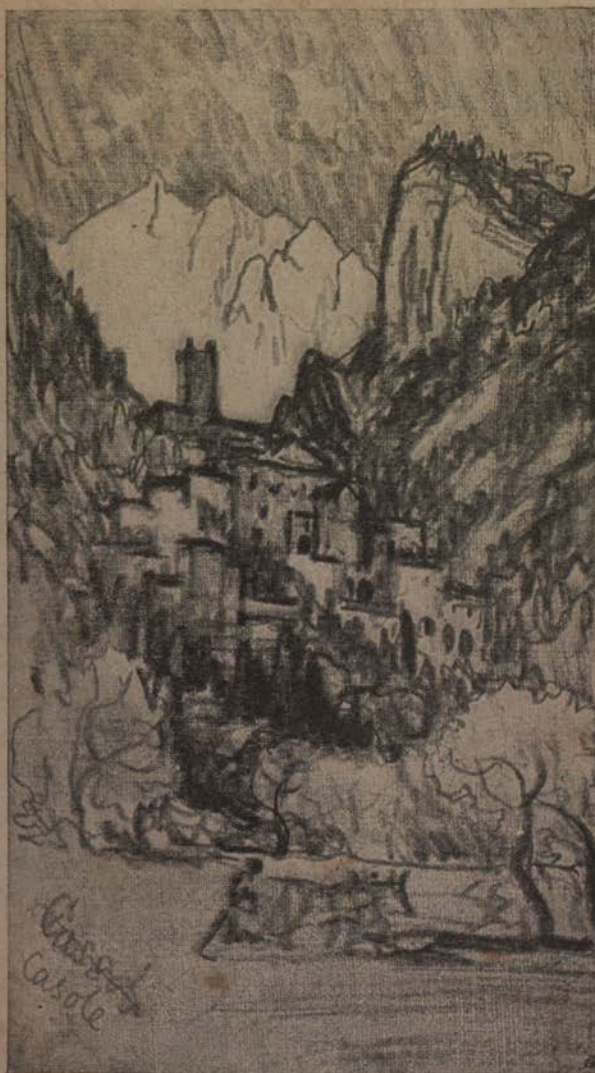
portly inhabitant of the place, smoking a cigar out of one corner of his mouth, who had a look in his eyes—quick and highly intelligent—very different from his fellows'. I was not at all surprised when he asked me in fluent American if I was going around much. He talked Tuscan, at pleasure, with an American intonation, not at all agreeable; but when he turned to the language

of his later adoption there was no tinge of latinity about it. A pleasant, friendly, most satisfied man, he was pleased with everything he had done in life; glad that he had gone out to Harrisburgh in Pennsylvania and stayed there for fourteen years, "making money and getting drunk"—for he confessed to both pursuits; again he was glad that he had left it and returned to what he owned to be an existence rather than a career. It was quiet, but he had got to like it; there was no whisky, and he was glad of it. Two thousand dollars, he supposed, would buy up Castelnuovo, cotton mills and all; well, he hadn't bought it yet. Instead, he was there in his shirt-sleeves, smoking Tuscan cigars, happy and not drunken. I should have liked to tell him—but did not—how much I thought he had taken the wiser part. Harrisburgh might be good, and whisky; but the green uplands of the Garfagnana must needs be better, and a crack with a friend in the piazza, and a flask of Vernace cooled with a little spring water. I did hint at their excellence, even at their superiority. "I guess you are right," says he, "I find them better." Tuscan still, at the heart, you see, this large, cocksure, genial man; but also a rare creature—a Tuscan who knew himself to be so, having been taught the stern discipline of Harrisburgh, and much whisky.

Trout, shepherds, and running water.

Leaving this quiet town you must follow the Serchio once more on its way to the plains and osiers of Lucca. When I went down it had so much of the air of a Norwegian salmon river that I persuaded myself it held salmon, or, at any rate, trout,[1] and

[1] And so it does—or did—for I ate some at Castelnuovo, fresh and fresh.



NEAR SAN MARCELLO.

fished it carefully for two runs and one long pool. There may have been snow in the water, or thunder in the air; or I was inexpert, or the fish were not taking; or there were none. I state the facts, that I rose no fish, nor saw any rise. Flies a plenty were upon the water; it was insufferably hot. The only breeze came in steaming gusts, as you get it from an engine-room at sea; it was blowing scirocco, as they say. Otherwise it was good for me to be there, amid thymy scents, scents of acacia and sweet briar, singing of nightingales on the wooded heights above me, tinkling of *grilli*, and the tumbling, surging noises of Serchio hastening to well-wooded Lucca.

A lovely glen, indeed, is this of the Serchio, finely clad on both sides with oak and chestnut, and as I saw it this May vividly yellow with broom. On the left bank, where the river broadens and swells, the woods are on a ridge, betwixt which and the mountains lies another plain. Upon that ridge Barga stands, a severe, little serried town of grey and madder. There also stand Coreglia, Fosciandora, Albiano, and Pieve Fosciana, its smaller counterparts. As to your course from this point, you run down Serchio to Borgo a Mozzano in order to cross; you go up stream on the further bank for a mile or more; you then leave the Serchio for the Lima, and so you reach Bagni di Lucca. It is a shady road for the main part, great in traffic in the early summer. At every bend of the tree-covered way you meet shepherds with their flocks, homing, poor dusty souls, to their mountains from the Maremma—sheep and one

pig, goats and one sheep, steers and one goat; that is the way with them. They have been down in those broad solitudes all the winter, grazing, but now are coming home. Many a Beppino of the Garfagnana has been yearning for his Nannetta in heartful verses; many a Nannetta at home is standing among the ridged

PONTE DEL DIAVOLO, BAGNI DI LUCCA.

olives watching the road, and singing her soul out among the twinkling grey leaves.

Ho trapiantato un giglio alla marina,
L' ho trapiantato nell' Orbetellana,

she has been crying all the winter: but now he is coming back:

E vedo, e vedo, e non vedo chi voglio,
Vedo le foglie di lontan tremare,
E vedo lo mio amore in su quel poggio.

Here's poetry, if I know it. And I met the poets by scores—tall, bony, sombre-eyed young

men, brown as walnuts, extraordinarily gentle, and to me, a stranger and a journeyman, extraordinarily courteous. Their hats went off to my sublimity: God forgive me for obtaining it. Is any man in the world worthy a poet's salute? I remember one pretty group, a family party. First came countless goats, stepping daintily (as if to save the dust), with nodding heads and blinking ears all in a harmony; there was a mule with panniers, in one of which a new-born kid, barely an hour old, still dazed and listless before the world; and then the family. A tall and bearded *Babbo*, many children hanging to his coat, and a handsome mother leading the second mule. Upon him were the bedding, pots, pannikins, and gridirons of the household, and atop of all, face downwards, thrown across like sacks and strapped into safety, two yellow-haired babies in deep sleep. The father pointed them out to me as he passed, but I had already seen their brown legs, and rosy cheeks turned sideways. Yet he pointed them out. "Così," he said, "così si va adagio," and laid his hand on one little swooning shoulder. Thus he had not gone himself, good man. Here was a picture for George Morland, or a better than he.

The Baths of Lucca has the leafy amenity, the watered roads, the retired villas, obliging tradesmen (very brisk with their go-carts), geraniumed gardens, and trim terrace-walks of, let us say, Clapham Park. It cannot escape, however, and does not escape the smug obtuseness of that sanctuary; in fact, it is not the thing for which one travels the mountains of Tuscany. I observed in it a boulevard dedi-

Lima.

cated—I know not why—to the person and conversation of Mr. Marion Crawford. This

BARGA.

is the fact: *Viale Marion Crawford.* I daresay that he stopped there, and am sure that he was comfortable; but personally I was glad to find

out that the sooner you leave the Bagni the sooner you are in the mountains again, and can begin to climb in between them. You have Battifolle in front of you, a towering green cone of 6000 feet. The Lima roars and tumbles about two sides of this monster, and about him go you—to enter the most magnificent gorge anywhere north of Rome. Very narrow it is, and very deep under the crags: there are some five or six miles of it, but the road is excellent. When Castruccio marched this way, as march he did, in 1323, to abase the Pistojesi and trample their flag in the dust, it must have been as jeopardous an enterprise as any recorded in the history books. The place is a sort of Khyber, like the Roncesvalles of fancy, not of fact—

Halt sunt li pui e tenebrus e grant.

It is a Passage Perilous of chivalry, a place for Amadis or Tyrant the White—so high, so quiet (but for the sighing of the river), so beset with ambushes. But, in his own way, and with the stuff he had, Castruccio was the Hannibal, the Napoleon of his day.

Out of this deep and dangerous place you emerge into a new countryside. You leave the Garfagnana for the Pistojese, a very bright green, gay and elfin, but still pastoral country; a smiling, tender landscape of pale tints, but still a country of young poets and true religion. The grass is all in flower, the scythes are busy swishing it down, the *cicale* are jingling all their little bells; from ridge and ridge, from Popiglio, Piteglio, Campiglio, Mammiano, and other white *pacsi*, you hear the church-towers

The Pistojese, San Marcello.

call the hour to each other; at every quarter mile you see a shrine to Madonna, and never one without its hedgeflower nosegay in a tumbler. And so you cross a bridge called Pontepetri and come to San Marcello, more prosperous because more accessible than most of the hill-towns—a cream and white, well-kept village with an air of Pistoja in its broad-eaved, green-shuttered streets, its chattering *trattorie*, and substantial inns. It has a hideous church—the fine old belfry left—and celebrates by the lapidary art the greatness of a Duke Ferruccio.[1] It has handsome, free-looking women, lovely children; and it is disposed for the summering of fatigued Florentine English—with *pensions*, Anglican services (of a high order), chemists, biscuit-bakers, photograph-shops, and touts of all sorts; and there's an end of the matter. Its inn would be better if it were more racial; but against "home comforts" and amateur photography the God of Nature fights in vain.

It is upon the edge of that great old road from Modena to Pistoja, of which something has been said already, and more remains to be said.

[1] This was, in fact, Francesco Ferrucci of Florence, a captain under Pope Clement VII., the particular Medici who, in 1530, raised the chances of his house to regain the sovereignty. Ferrucci, made Commissary-General, marched an army from Pisa to Pistoja by the Val di Lima, burning as he went. It is to be feared San Marcello had no reason to bless him.

CHAPTER VI

PISTOJA TO FLORENCE—THE PLAIN

PISTOJA, being one of the gates of Tuscany, should be seen at the beginning, never at the end of your errantry. I have been lucky in this, that not only have I seen it first, but that I have always seen it in early morning light, saluting the dawn, as I was doing.[1]

Auroral thoughts.

I saw it from Cireglio, after the long and painful traverse of the hills from Modena; I saw all the Val d' Arno lie below me like a carpet, with Pistoja for a rose upon the intricate pattern —a blot of pink and purple in the vague blue-green field. Little as I knew of it then—indeed, I knew nothing more of it than that pistols were called by its name—I could not fail to see it as the threshold of the enchanted land to which I was wandering, a pilgrim to its holy places. Through Pistoja, Florence was mine, Pisa, Siena,

[1] From San Marcello to Pontepetri is your way, a broad, flat road between parks and orchards of green. It is at Pontepetri—where there is a bridge over the Reno—that you turn up to the right, and climb to Piastre, where the hills are bald and scabby, and more like the downs about Florence. Anon you descend and come to Cireglio, and before you, then, see a bluff; and beyond that, empty air. That is the magic Land's End—over in that misty space is all that you have journeyed out to see.

Volterra, sea-washed Orbetello. The Arno, whose every stone Dante knew, lay in the midst of that brocaded plain, and into Arno flowed those rivers of lovely names—slow Elsa, white-beached Sieve, Era and Ema, Evola and Pesa, names of very music.[1] I need not say that I was very young; it is necessary to be that if you are to see Italy aright. Nor is it possible for me to describe with what drum-music of the heart I looked upon the vivid, sunlit glory to which I made my descent. Not only did it surpass promise, it out-topped the expectation, even the suspicion, of its glory. The incomparable freshness of every hue—the daring of a race of men who should wash their house-fronts orange or rose, who should paint them white and keep them at that bridal point—the effrontery and success of their building, whose farmhouses were like boxes, and yet picturesque; whose churches like barns, and yet venerable. Heavens! if I was ragged, rather hungry, a truant, without pence—what did these things weigh? Here was I, the bridegroom, before the unveiled bride.

Procession to Pistoja.

The nearing prospect of the little old city, dipped in green and gold—a dome of dusky red, a grey tower or so, weather-bitten walls, something bright and clean, some

[1] Actually, if there is no mist in the valley, you see Pistoja, and the course of the Ombrone, and the road to Signa. Monte Morello hides up Florence on your east, Monte Albano the Arno and San Miniato de' Tedeschi on your west. The road down from Cireglio winds, but is a good one, and Cireglio itself has a fine old church and long, straying street. You discover that the Val d' Arno is not so wide as that of the Rhone, nor near so fruitful, nor so outlined with sharp rocks. Nor are its roads by any means shady as those of that pleasant valley.

You will see a ragged butt of Montemurlo still standing on the mountain edge. Castruccio had that built to torment the Pistojesi.

prosperous air, touched and took prisoner my confidence. I became an ingenuous youth, and rightly so, before such engaging manners. Pistoja and I, on that mild spring morning, seemed to be singing a duet. As I came on I overtook country folk going my way, women on donkeys, plaiting straws as they went, children running, the men walking together and apart, full of the most exuberant talk you ever heard; bullock-carts, laden mules, and such like. There was a steady stream of people setting towards Pistoja, some of whom had come far by the looks of them; mountaineers some, with swathed legs and staves in their hands; priests with vivid green umbrellas; farmers in gigs much too small for their persons. I suppose the road is the greatest leveller next to death; the dust and sweat had coloured us all alike, and I had no more difficulty at the *dazio* than the natives. Not that I had less. The customs officers opened my bundle and handled one or two of my books. I let myself be floated in by the pressure of the crowd; together we all swam like a bore-of-the-tide up the long street.

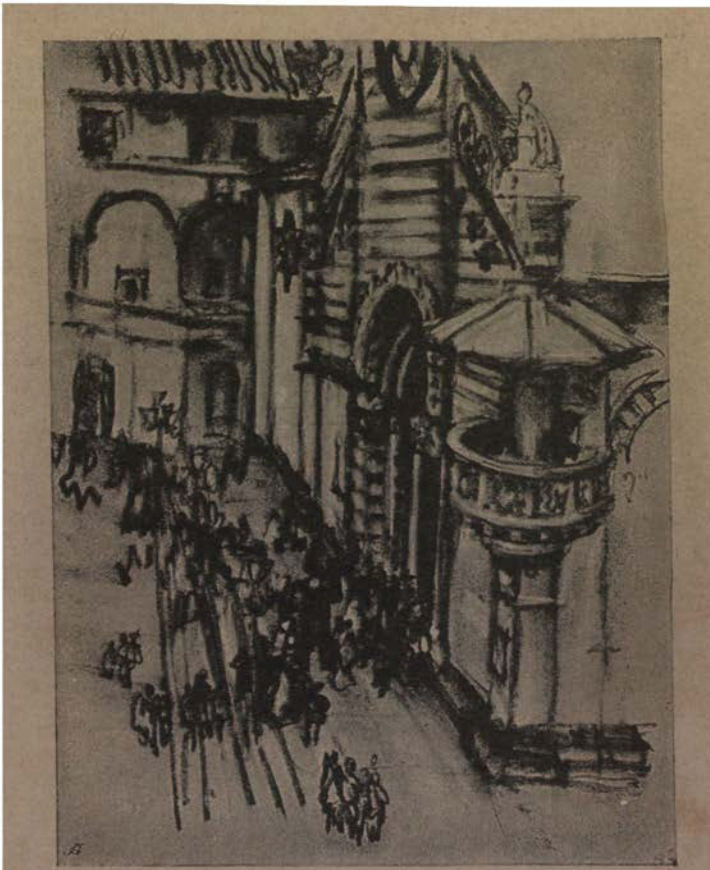
The last of the Cancellieri.

I found myself jostling with a sharp-faced, bristle-bearded countryman, carrying tools and a wickered flask of wine over his shoulder, and fell into some talk with him.

"Why are we all in such a stew to get to Pistoja?" I asked him, after passing the time of day.

He looked at me keenly. I soon found out that it took very little to excite a Tuscan's curiosity. "Where can you be from, who know

not that?" he returned at once. "It is San Atto we are going to visit."



THE PULPIT, PRATO.

"Ah! San Atto the Bishop. They expose his relics?"

"That," he said, "is the state of the case.

Every year on this day we go to visit San Atto."

I admired the devotion, and proposed to share it. "*Già, già,*" says he. "It is a very good custom."

"In my country," I said, "such reverence as this is done by stealth, if done at all. We do not even know certainly the whereabouts of some of our greatest saints."

THE MARKET, PISTOJA.

My companion's eyes twinkled; he pondered the remark, then murmured some polite regrets. He thought it curious, he said, that so practical a nation as the English should neglect any obvious source of profit.

"It is because my countrymen have become absorbed in material profit," said I, "that they

distrust any inward promptings. They affect to despise ceremony; really, they fear it. They will doff their hats to the Queen: 'There!' they say, 'there's prosperity for you!' But if you were to put up a figure of the Queen of heaven in a blue cloak and crown of stars they would show their independence by marching past her, chins

PISTOJA.

in the air, and hats jammed down to the ears. They are congees and deference to a living bishop—you should see them at their shop-doors when my lord drives up in his carriage; but a dead bishop, be he as holy as Grosseteste of Lincoln, as puissant in war as Hugh of Durham, they consider to be no more than a spadeful of dust."

He was greatly interested, he was amazed.

"This," he said, "is the wildest folly. How can a Queen upon earth help you so far as our Lady in heaven? This is a very short-sighted business. Your nation will never prosper on those terms."

"Yours is the opinion of a few of us," I replied. "We even go so far as to say that a newspaper that supports itself by tickling the baser parts of base people had better do it with the end of a rope and be through with it. But your San Atto, I fear, would come into conflict with our police. They would say, 'This prelate is dead and has been buried, yet here he is again. Into the ground with him, or into the British Museum.' You would call this madness."

"Why," says my friend, "I should. As I understand it, there is a plain bargain. We run to San Atto with our difficulties, who, as having been Bishop of Pistoja, knows all the circumstances to a tick. My own, now, is a scapegrace son, who has set up for a footpad under Vallombrosa, and be hanged to him. Very well. I take my case to San Atto. He says, 'Two candles at my altar before I look into it.' That is fair enough. But you see the lie of the thing."

I had indeed never seen it more clearly. I asked him if he was a Tuscan. He shrugged his shoulder. "Who knows what I may be, sir?" said he. "I am by birth, like my father before me, a Vajanese. We don't reckon ourselves to be of any nation but that. The Marquess[1] is my master, and he's no Tuscan, but a Pistolese."

"He may be a Tuscan for all that," I said; to which he assented readily.

[1] Panciatichi.

"Well," he continued, after a pause, "he's a great lord, and should have the best of everything while it lasts. One is taken and another is left. Now my own name, let me tell you, was good for something once upon a time."

ENTRANCE TO MARKET, PISTOJA.

I begged him to tell it me. "My name of origin," he replied, "is Cancellieri. In fact Gino Cancellieri is the whole of it; but they call me Maso's Gino in the ordinary way, and as often as not Il Bazza, because of this great chin of mine."

It was now my turn to be interested, not in

his chin, which was nothing out of the common run, but in his name. This unshaven hedger bore the arms which Pistoja had assumed in his right—the chequer-board arms, the White and the Black. In this man's blood had been brewed that infernal drink which drove Florence mad and Corso Donati to a dog's death.[1] All this I told him. "Your forefather, my dear sir," I ended, "was tyrant of Pistoja."

The last of the Cancellieri took this at first with great phlegm.

"He may have been, for all I know," he said; "but my own father was a road-mender, and broke stones betwixt Piastre and Cireglio. He was famous for it. You have been walking on his metal this morning, I doubt, and permit me to say there is no better. Tyrant of Pistoja, was he? Well, there's a trade for a man!" The humour of it now tickling him, he laughed gaily.

I said that I considered it a less reputable trade than road-mending; but Cancellieri would have his laugh out now that he had caught it.

"Why, it may be so," he allowed. "I don't care to dispute it. But what gravels me is the justice of it. My grandfather, as you may say, walked soft-foot upon the sweat of the Pistolesi, and now here are the Pistolesi doing the same by my father. Well, well, that's as good as a comedy any day."

"The thought consoles you?" I asked. He raised an eyebrow; it is thus the Tuscans usually shrug.

"I say that it tickles me," he answered. "You may not relish justice for a full meal, but

[1] See Appendix to this chapter.

you may learn to be diverted by it as a snack. That is my case, signorino. To meet again, sir; your servant." He took off his woollen cap as he made this little speech, and I saw him engage a friend in lively conversation.

I was now in the centre of a hive of people, the most delightful and interesting I had ever

PALACE OF PODESTÀ, PISTOJA.

seen. Their background was the Cathedral Square of Pistoja, where all ages of history stand together in a common suit of dust. The octagonal baptistery, a fine building of Romanesque design, built in alternate courses of green and yellow marble; the colonnaded front of a huge church, the massive belfry, Gothic palaces of Commune and Podestà—here was evidence enough of a great past. Familiarly

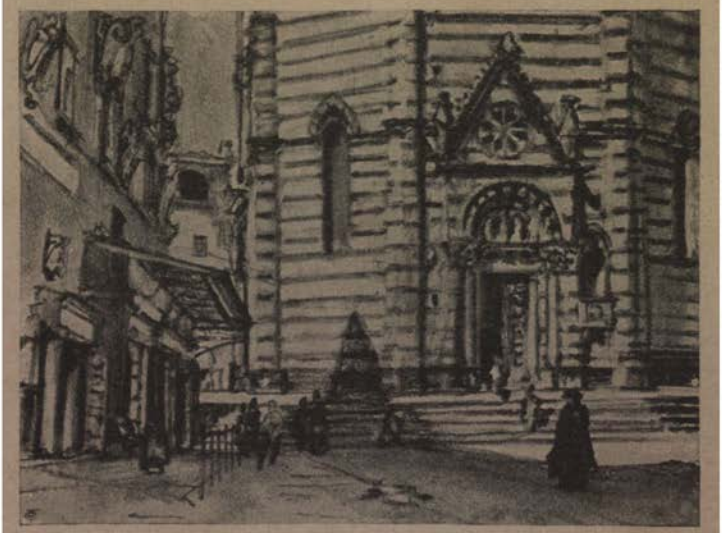
The market-place.

with all this were modern stucco houses, pink and yellow, creamy or green; a tavern with its bush of myrtle; barbers' shops with striped poles and dangling basins: in the midst the sheds, hovels, and booths of traffickers from outside, come to trade in the market. Early as the hour was, and it could hardly have gone six o'clock, the square was thronged with buyers and sellers; but through the press two steady streams set in and out of the church, where, no doubt, San Atto lay in state, open to make bargains.

San Atto.

I saw him, a wizened, little brown atomy of a man in cope and mitre, lying on his side in a glass-fronted silver shrine. The masses were incessant: no sooner was one over than the next celebrant and his boy were on the steps. Completely indifferent to these, their beginnings, climaxes, or accomplishment, regarding them apparently as works of nature (like the sequence of seasons, precessions of equinox, etc.), the worshippers pursued their private devotion. I saw the last of the Cancellieri come in to effect his bargain; he was exceedingly methodical. It was as if he had measured off in his mind the due length of service, and had begun to pay out. His lips were moving as he approached with his two tapers alight. As he chose a place for them, as he stuck them in among the others which, in various stages of decay, were flickering or flaring upon the candelabrum, his prayers went on. His eyes wandered about and about; he surveyed critically all the company, but he never stopped his prayers. They ceased not as he pushed and elbowed for a place, but the pace quickened perceptibly when his eyes fell upon the vested

mummy behind the glass. They ran on with the regularity of a steam-engine's throbs; they reached their appointed end—his fingers pattered over his brow and breast—he stooped his head—lower—lower—kissed the pavement. He rose and turned away, his lips locked up; and before he was out of the chapel he had met a praying



BAPTISTERY, PISTOJA.

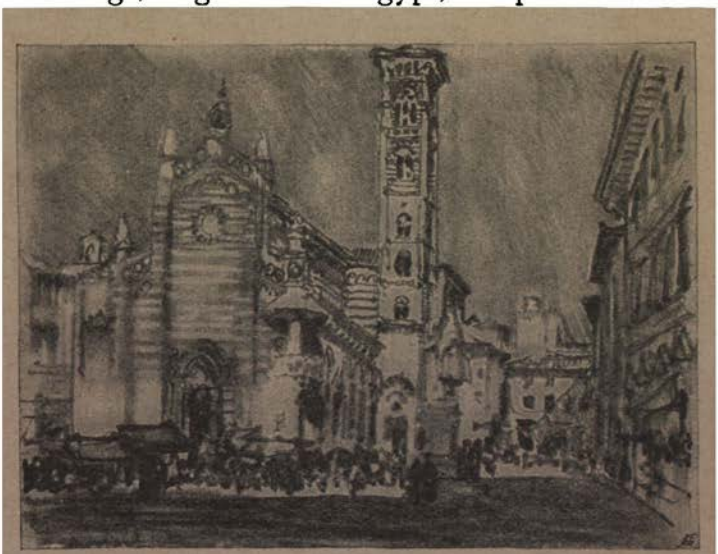
friend. He talked the time of day, but I saw that the friend, though he listened, went on praying. I hope his son was turned from evil courses on the Vallombrosa road, but if I had been San Atto I should have hardened my heart.

Such humours apart, the pleasures to be got out of Pistoja are very much like the benefits you may coax from San Atto. You must make your bargain with the place. If you love the

very words "Middle Age"; if they conjure up to your mind glowing old folios of black letter with gilt and florid initials; crimson and green and blue pages in which slim ladies with spiked head-dresses walk amid sparse flowers and trees like bouquets, or where men-at-arms attack walled cities no bigger than themselves, or long-legged youths with tight waists and frizzed hair kiss girls under apple trees; or a king is on a dais with gold lilies for his background, minstrels on their knees before him, lovers in the gallery;—if, with all such dainty circumstance, you can be pleased and not offended with the shrewd surmise of savagery and heathenism only too ready to go naked, then you will do well in Pistoja. It has the real mediæval air. It is elaborately built, by a people to whom beauty of detail was well worth the labour and cost. It has been battered by rams, blackened by fire, fretted by weather, speckled all over with men's blood. It is rude, it is hale. Things quietly beautiful are to be found in byways, flowering unseen, but by no means considering their sweetness wasted, as the poet foolishly imagined. It was like the eighteenth century, the public age, to think you were unhappy if you were not admired. The frieze of the Hospital—*Spedale del Ceppo*—is not only sweet in intention, it is fragrant as a cowslip mead, though I daresay it is very bad sculpture. The *Visitation* in San Giovanni, however, is one of the best Della Robbias in Italy—an urgent, tender, momentary thing. In San Francesco al Prato—a wreck of a church—there are remains of the frescoes which once

The bargain with Pistoja.

covered it from floor to ceiling and from end to end. A vast picture Bible is there, with all the fabulous monsters—Behemoth and Leviathan spouting in the flood,—and all the semi-fabulous: bearded hermits milking stags, camels, pious pelicans, giraffes, prophets in caves, processions of kings, flights into Egypt, shepherds afield



PRATO.

reading the message of the winter stars. You can see such things better at Pisa, in the Campo Santo; but it is good to decipher them in this vast deserted church. And in another—San Pietro—it is pleasant to remember that every Bishop of Pistoja used here to espouse the abbess of the Benedictines. Once, at least, in the series of these mystical rites the issue was not mystical at all. One could imagine a tale

for Boccaccio, I think, where, for love of a beautiful and high-born abbatissa, a certain *giovane*, called (let us say) Tebbaldo, took orders, became Bishop of Pistoja, celebrated his metetherial nuptials, and—but I shall leave the rest to Boccaccio.

These are nearly all the contributions of Pistoja to the bargain which I told you is to be made.[1] The attractions of the city, which are very real, lie perhaps neither in them nor in history, but rather in this, that the treacheries, bloodthirsts, wicked lusts of the little den of thieves have all burnt themselves out, and that what is left is as clean and wholesome as poor brown San Atto, who lies, somewhat shrunken, in his jewelled cope within an altar of old silver, as ready as Pistoja herself to strike bargains with the faithful.

Of the two roads from here to Florence both are bad, but the Via Pratese is the worse, and by no means improved by a "light railway." It gives you Prato, however, a gay and spacious little city, with a Cathedral for which old Lassel's adjective "neat" will do

And so to Florence.

[1] Here is one more, which I borrow from Villani. Before the Pistolesi were under the Florentine yoke they had a great castle at Carmignano, a place tucked under Monte Albano, close to Poggio a Cajano, with a tower 700 braccia high, "and on the top two arms of marble, whose hands made the *fiche* at Florence." Deplorable sign! Worse—much worse—than our "long nose." Workmen in Florence, when you offered them their wages, used to shake their heads at the money, saying, "I can't see it; the *Rocca* of Carmignano is in front of me." So when Florence got hold of the place the Pistolesi "were made to do the pleasure of the Florentines, and dismantle the said *Rocca*." This story shows, among other things, how close to Florence the Pistolese *contado* ran. In fact, the little city owned the whole amphitheatre of mountains to the north and west. The eastern wing of it—Monte Calvana, Monte Morello—belonged to the Conti Alberti, who owned or were suzerains of Prato.

very well.[1] It is exactly that, and in design and scope not much more. But like all Tuscan churches of any standing it is enriched by delightful things. Here they are a lunette of Della Robbia stuff over the door, with a supreme and buxom Pratese girl doing duty for Madonna; Donatello's pulpit and its girdle of dancing

PALACE, PISTOJA.

children; the very girdle of the Virgin herself, "the same she comforted Saint Thomas" (to use Rawdon Crawley's useful locution); and Lippo Lippi's one successful fresco, in the choir. He has essayed in this the Ghirlandajo scheme of great dusky, arcaded interiors, light landscapes of plain and mountain seen through windows, sombre

[1] Perhaps the reader will remember that he said of Siena, "The Cathedral is a neat building."

men in Florentine dresses—crimson, orange, and brown,—and one or two pretty women in pale blue moving about in the rich gloom. On one side it is Herodias' daughter, in another a maid-servant and a scullion kissing in a corner. Charmingly pretty; yet it is to be noted that but for this incident and group, you would not know by a study of Tuscan art that kissing was a habit of this people. Nor is it, in public, at least.

By the other road—the Via Florentina—which goes dead straight by Poggio a Cajano to Signa over the sun-baked plain, you must travel under a fiercely white sky, over cushions of dust, through little brawling, fly-blown towns, for some six or eight miles.[1] This makes it considerably shorter than the other, and there are no metals to involve your wheels until you reach Campo Bisenzio. Your reward will be that you get the whole length of Monte Albano, and can see the castles upon it, one after another—including that Carignano which I mentioned in the note to a former page. Hereabouts also is a fine wood, and the Medici villa of Poggio a Cajano, which looks roomy, and is so—and contains a good academical kind of fresco by Pontormo.

And so to Florence by the gate of the railway station and Santa Maria Novella. Colourless, heat-ridden, fly-ridden, dust-laden country—or so it was when I drove in that way last May. White sky, grey foliage, drab dust, yellow houses. There's a palette for you! But it *is* to be seen as tenderly hued as an opal, as fresh and dewy as a garden at dawn; and the happier he who can see it so at all times.

[1] It is as nearly as possible twenty miles from gate to gate.

APPENDIX

THE CANCELLIERI FACTIONS

I DON'T know that the Cancellieri were ever actually tyrants of Pistoja, though by implication they and their works tyrannised over all the Val d' Arno until Castruccio, the Napoleon of those parts, made havoc of them with his rude besom. Just as the Buondelmonti and Uberti began the Guelf-Ghibelline strifes, so did these Cancellieri the Black and White. Here is an outline of the story, which (as will subsequently be seen) lacks the romantic touch of the other. In the year 1300 there was a party of young Cancellieri—some half-dozen of them—drinking in a tavern—

Late, late at e'en, drinking the wine.

Half in joke, one of these lads fell to scuffling with another; half in drink, he struck and knocked him down. The two were separated, but the man assailed took it badly, and vowed he would get level before sunrise.

So he did, after the fashion of his nation. He lay in wait in the street outside his assailant's house, and when one of that family returned—which he did after a long day's journey, having had, observe, no more to do with the fray than the man in the moon—leapt upon him, struck him in the face with his dagger, and as he fell back against the wall, hacked at his right hand and cut it all-but off. The young ruffian got clear away before they took in his half-dead kinsman; but if there had been any doubt as to his identity, it is due to his family to say that they let there be none. His father and brothers, indeed, handed him over to the house of the injured man to do what they would with him. What they did was this: they dragged him out into the stables, held out his arm over the manger and cut off his hand. Then they slashed him in the face in the same cheek as he had assailed, and turned him out of doors with these words: *Blood will stanch blood.*

That was the way of it. The great family was split in two.

The White party clove to the side first injured in the wine shop; the Black party to that of the man who did the trivial wrong. To the Whites ran the Ghibellines, to the Black the Guelfs. All those miseries which had distracted Florence, Pisa, Lucca, Arezzo all the thirteenth century began again in the fourteenth. Of them I propose to be silent here, as elsewhere.

CORNER OF THE PALAZZO STROZZI.

CHAPTER VII

GODI, FIRENZE

Godi, Firenze, poi che se' sì grande
Che per mare e per terra batti l' ali,
E per l' inferno il nome tuo si spande.
26 *Inf.*

IF it would be hard to beat the scorn of the words, even the scorner himself could never have known the bitter truth he went on to predict. Dante wrote in exile —with fire and sword over Florence in his mind's eye. What he could not have known, but would have accepted grimly had he known, was that the very greatness of Florence was to be her ruin. If the town had been on a hill it might be now as beautiful as Siena, but had never been crown of Tuscany. If it had not been crown of Tuscany it need not have been in slavery for five hundred years. But these are idle *ifs*. Florence held the Medici and the Medici enslaved Florence. Out of those very strifes for which Dante suffered—strifes between privilege and profit for the most part—out of those very strifes the Medici sucked their meat; and out of those detriments to good fortune themselves grew the strength of the town with which they headed their empire. For being

My Palinode.

FLORENCE.

midway up the Arno, with Pisa at the sea-gate, Pisa must fall if Florence were to live. And Pisa fell. And being threatened by mountain passes to north and south, whereof the gates were Pistoja on the road to Milan and Siena on that of Rome, Siena and Pistoja must each go mourning if the Florentines were to be content. So did

FROM THE CASCINE, FLORENCE.

Pistoja mourn, and so at last Siena. Florence became the seat of empire; the Grand Dukes were crowned in the Duomo, and buried in San Lorenzo; but almost from the hour of attaining all this glory the Florentine staple began to languish. Pisa was a desert, and Florence no nearer the sea. Cosimo built the haven at Leghorn, and settled a town half Jews and half Greeks. Leghorn throve; but the corn, the wine, the oil,

THE CAMPANILE, FLORENCE.

the wool, and, worst of all, the fine Tuscan florins, whose good usury was the real Florentine commodity, brought less and less profit home. When Monsieur de Brosses visited Florence in the days of the Grand Duke Leopold, he found the citizens giving evening parties and discussing *belles-lettres*. Politics were forbidden them, the Jesuits had charge of religion, they neither warred nor were warred upon. And so it has been ever since, whether Austria, France, or Savoy were over-lord: Florence is dead, and year by year shows less of what made her live as more and more foreigners come to picnic upon the remains. And by *dead*, I mean dead at the heart; for a city may have lost all that made it once appear significant and separate, and yet live, and yet be itself, by distinction and direction of the living spirit. So is Siena, a little town without commerce, or art, or any temporal prosperity, living still—the city still of Saint Catherine, of the Tolomei and Salimbeni, of Pandolfo Petrucci and all his turbulent household: so is Paris alive, hidden deep in a mountain of mortar, and stucco, and bad pictures. But Florence is very cold.

I am crying my palinode; for the years are not many[1] since I denied much of this. But the brickwork spreads apace. You cannot call Florence a mere handful now. The green vistas at street-ends, the peak of a mountain lonely in the light, the gleaming sun upon old convents far off, the tongue of a single cypress, or the sable cloud which marks a convocation of them—these are not the sights they were: you may walk

[1] They are *ten*. See *Earthwork out of Tuscany*, you that are curious in such a little matter (third edition), p. 18.

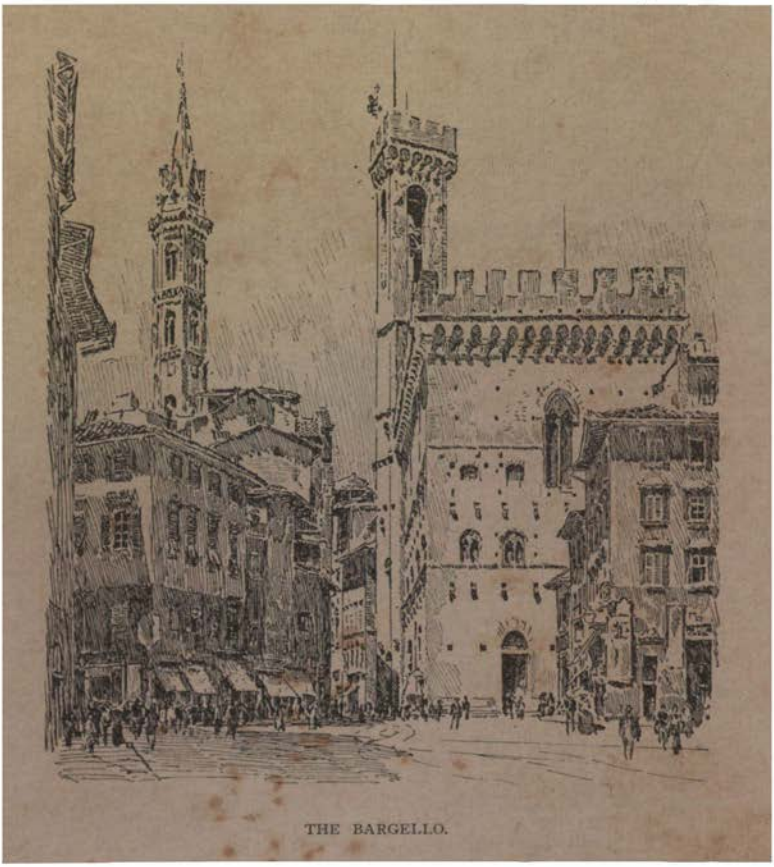
OUTSIDE FLORENCE.

from the Beccaria to the Mugnone, and hardly know that Fiesole still stands. From Rovezzano on the east to Il Pellegrino on the road to

PIAZZA SIGNORIA, FLORENCE.

the Mugello; from Peretola on this side of Arno to Signa upon that, the brick and plaster fungus has spread. There are houses all the way to

San Domenico, and the road to Ponte a Mensola has other than garden walls to hem it in. Within walls it is worse. The churches are museums, the palaces shops of bric-à-brac. Anything you



THE BARGELLO.

see you can buy, most of what you buy you had better not to have bought. You will hear more English in the streets than Tuscan. The place, in fact, is cosmopolitised, neither *sui generis*, nor

of the Tuscan, nor even of the Italian *genus*. It

VIA TORNABUONI.

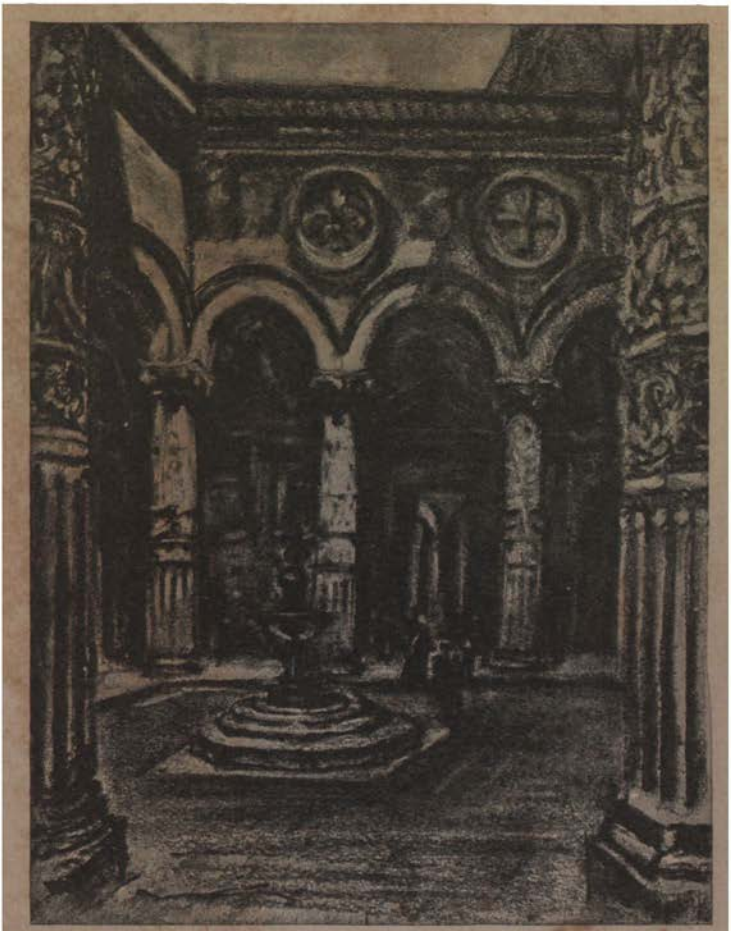
is in the case with Rome and Naples—but not with Milan and Venice.

Old stories, old books, old pictures—there are still these. Even if the stories have all been told, and the books are never read, and Mr. Berenson denies the authenticity of most of the pictures—there they are for the quiet eye to peruse, and the quiet mind to garner. Add the serene old churches: San Giovanni, incurably dignified—Santa Maria Novella golden as a nectarine—shabby, barren, sacred Santa Croce—and the towering rose-coloured Cathedral, most godless and most superb in Tuscany; add a tortuous street or two—Via Porta Rossa, Borgo SS. Apostoli, Borgo San Jacopo—to remind you of a day when Florentines went upon their feet, and street warfare was a living art; add some dusty shrines, beautiful as flowers, and not yet destroyed because they have been forgotten; add a few green gardens, the flashing prism of the Arno, quick to change from metal-yellow to hot green, from blue to violet, from grey to the glitter of steel; add the acacias in flower, the irises in the villa gardens like a windy sea of mauve; add the morning hope, the evening calm (for the star that rises over Fiesole rose also for Dante and Beatrice), the peasant girls singing like thrushes at open windows, an honest man here and there, and a place where you can eat your breakfast and look at Orsammichele—and you see there are still cakes and ale in Florence, pippins and cheese to come.

The city, as it now is, must be divined to have been beautiful, rather than confessed so. Too much has been done to it, too much crowded into narrow space, and too much allowed to spill over. When you begin

Divinations of beauty here.

the renewing of a Florence, with wires and poles for your telegrams, rails for your tramways,



PALAZZO DELLA SIGNORIA, FLORENCE.

kerbed pavements for your foot passengers, and the hundred other make-shifts a man has been taught to need, you distort an old town in order

to make a botched parody of a new one. The narrow ways of Florence were intended for the passage of the citizens, who were at home there, and received each other there with entertainment of business or pleasure. In the open piazza they feasted, danced, made shows, sacred or profane; in the streets they traded, and walked as they traded. A train of mules might pick its way between, a horseman or two, a file of infantry. Room would be made for an ox-team now and then, for a saint under his canopy, or God in the pyx, or a dead man on his bier. This is the kind of traffic for which streets like the Corso, Borgo SS. Apostoli, Calzaioli, or Por Santa Maria were designed. The present effect is disenchanting and full of every discomfort of sound, sight, and sense. A very short walk discovers this: you get no effect, there is no illusion; rather, there are many, one upon the heels of another. Go from the Porta Croce through the Borgo as far as the Proconsolo. You seem to be in a town where every swarming alley, every little hole in the wall heaped with merchandise, speaks of ancientry. Glance, as you go, to the left down the Borgo Allegri. At the end of a long vista of blue shadow on which the light breaks unequally, like a line of white water, you will see in full sun the warm brown flank of a brick church. That is Santa Croce, and so Desiderio may have looked at it as he walked from Corbignano to his work. Turn up the Proconsolo, "translated" beyond hope, save for that beaten old Bastile which they call the Bargello[1];

[1] Even in 1754, Zocchi showed this place as it was and now is; and with a man being hanged by the thumbs on the wall!

at the end of it you will have before you that rose-coloured mountain of marble which Arnolfo planned, Giotto and Andrea Pisano contrived,

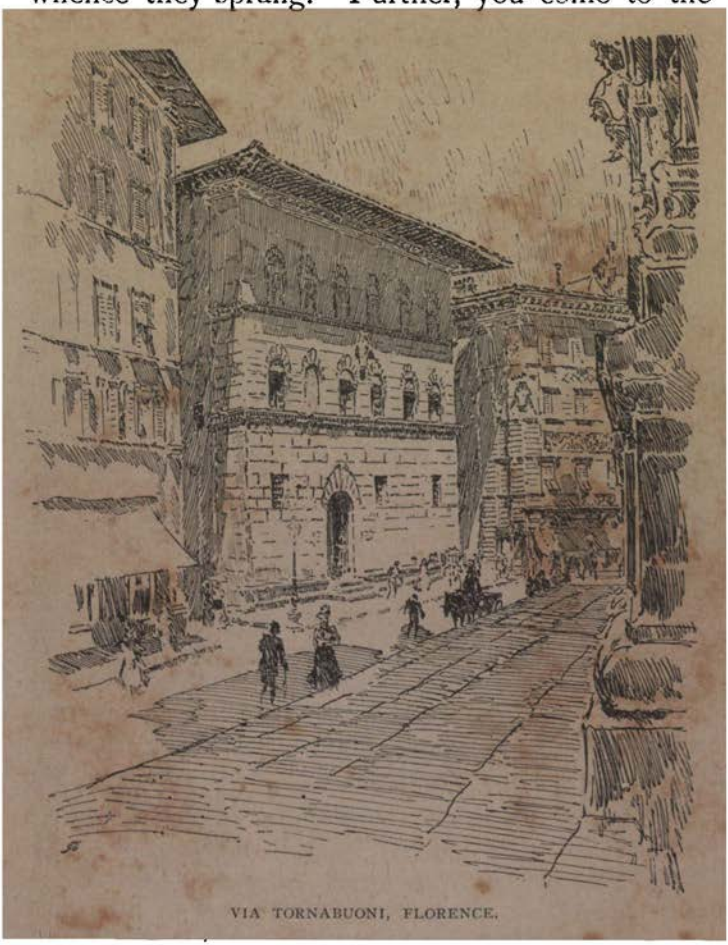
DOORWAY, PALAZZO VECCHIO.

and Brunelleschi crowned. Beside it stands the stem of marble which Giotto built for the bells and made of auroral colour; beyond, the pale ivory

and worn black, the pilastered facets and bleached leaden roof of what Mr. Ruskin has called the central church of Etruscan Christianity. However that may be, you will have a sight before you which will give you little encouragement to criticise its parts—to complain, for instance, that the church lacks masses of shade, and the belfry a steeple. But there is no doubt at all that where you look at this triad with admiration, you see the Pisan group in a stupor. This is as much as to say—and all criticism of them amounts to no more—that you cannot see the things. That you cannot is the curse of Florentine prosperity. To be crown of Tuscany, or England, or great Rome, means that you must be hampered by attendants. The jackals may keep the flies from their master, but he is the less seen for a king. One test of great architecture must be its achievement of general design; and here the Florentine group necessarily fails. You cannot see them sum up and achieve the city, you cannot see them all fairly massed, you cannot see one of them full. Apart as at Pisa, pre-eminent as at Siena, no church in the world could approach the majesty of this, nor any proportions dreamed by man come within sight of its strength to soar.

In the Via Larga—which now they call Cavour—you will be in the Medicean quarter, with wide ruin on either hand, but ruin which began before the tramways, ruin of the eighteenth century, not without a dignity of its own. Hard by the square palace which Michelezzo built for old Cosimo, is the stuccoed church of the Jesuits, which M. de Brosses admired; opposite is the stuccoed house of the Panciatichi, where he may have

been entertained at evening parties. The Panciatichi left a much better house in Pistoja whence they sprang. Further, you come to the



VIA TORNABUONI, FLORENCE.

piazza, the church and the convent of Saint Mark, a yellow and plaster-smitten pile, late *rifacimento* of honest old stuff. Medici grand-

dukes made a logical end of what Medici merchants began. Bianca Capello and her unhappy Francis have been here, and all the age of ruffs; Cosimo Terzo, haunted by Jesuits; Gian Gastone, shrivelling under hair-powder; gilt coaches;[1] fine gentlemen in skirts—the redoubtable Signor Casanova, Knight of the Golden Spur, among them, braving it with the best and told to go; great ladies in hoops, and improper females in masks; and all the barefoot mob of Florentines in the background, voiceless now, who of old had held the Gonfalon, idle, who once had made the city, vicious, screaming for shows, or drowsing amid filth and flies under the sun; a cityful of courtesans, pimps, *castrati*, led-captains, dicing soldiers, *abbés*, and minion pages, false, glittering, rotten, crapulous, all that you choose to call it of the sort, but yet replete with character, a specific thing, a real inhabited country. Standing here, with the shell at your ear, you may dream at large and fill up with flesh and blood the hollow ghosts you discern under the eaves.

The Piazza Santa Maria, to which you will presently go, is in my poor judgment the finest in Florence, and the least disturbed, except perhaps that of the Signiory. It has two good *Quattrocento* buildings, the façade of its titular church and the loggia opposite; the space and light are ample enough to give value to the rest. It looks bigger than it is. Here also you must be content with an eighteenth-century effect, for here it was that La Pisanella—a fair, frail and devirginate lady—sent two honest gentlemen

[1] Which had glass tops, said Montaigne, in order that gentlemen riding at ease might look at the women at their windows.

to battle for her worthless person, and from a window facing the church watched the fray. The duel was with swords; they killed each other, and a third man bought La Pisanella. It is not too much to say that the Grand Dukes rebuilt Florence; for by what they added of monstrous, or vapid, or grandiose, they sucked

VILLA PALMIERI.

the sap from the more sober work of their forefathers, and what you see of this is but a pale penumbra of the truth.

So indeed you may walk about Florence for a first view, and be disconcerted with what you see. But the old charm can be recaptured at will. If by patches and remnants you have to divine your ways about the dead old place, by a short walk outside it you can colour your work. Florence

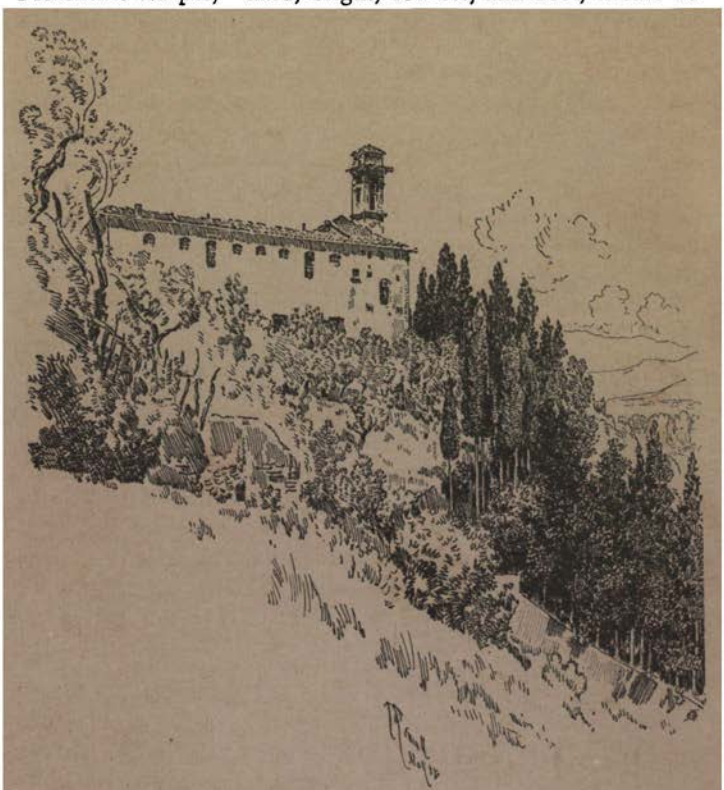
in her cup of verdure, seen from Settignano or Fiesole, or (looking north) from the Piazzale, or the terrace of San Miniato, is still one of the fairest, most gentle prospects a man may need to look upon. Watched from San Miniato you may believe it all to be as it was once—that it is still the garden which Montaigne considered it when he surveyed it from the top of Giotto's tower. The colour of the whole blends into soft white and purple; pre-eminent is the great dome, the bulk of the great rosy church. All about, brown and violet, yellow and pearl, the city with towers and loggias spreads like a root of flowers. Beyond are the weathered hillsides—grey, white, and black—a severe picture in *grisaille*. In the cleft huddles Fiesole with one thin tower; to the right a bare rock, a wood densely dark. But clouds of olive draw your eye downwards to San Gervasio and the garden-splendour of the plain. And so you are always drawn in Tuscany, wheresoever your feet may be fixed, to the pleasant seat, the abundance, the power and pride of Florence.

APPENDIX

FATE OF FLORENCE

THE proud, splendid, and miserable fate of Florence, to be Tuscan Crown in despite of Fiesole from whom she sprang—of Pisa, before whom in the beginning she was but a mean village—of Lucca, whose champion once laid her lower than the dust—and of Siena, Lady of all the valleys leading south,—is due to a dozen wafts of chance meeting at a point. Not to her seat on Arno, for Pisa had a better; not to the greatness of some

one De' Medici, for Petrucci of Siena was as great as any, and Castruccio of Lucca had been greater than he. Both are factors, but neither is the radical fact. That lies deep in the Florentine temper,—hard, bright, restless, and cool, salient in



BELLOSGUARDO, FLORENCE.

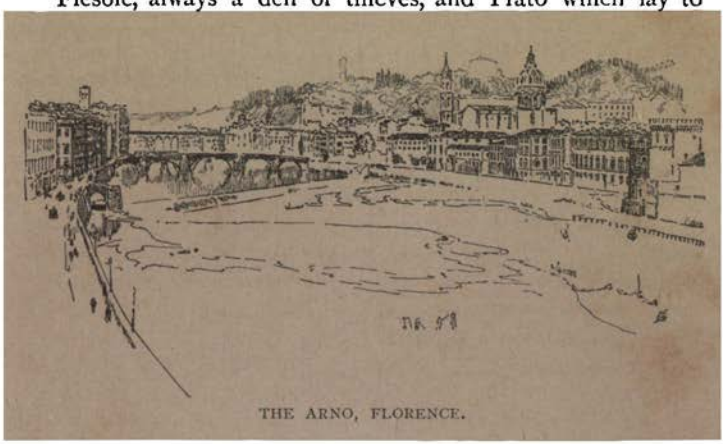
both Dante and Machiavelli, and latent in one Medici after another in a steady stream. That temper was, in Tuscany, and proved itself to be, the temper to endure. Florence underwent precisely the same stresses as every Tuscan town—as San Miniato with her Mangiadori and Malpigli at throat-cutting, as San Gimignano with her Ardinghelli and Salvucci, Pistoja

with Cancellieri and Panciatichi, Arezzo with Tarlati and Ubertini, as Siena with her Tolomei and Salimbeni. Florence had her Montagu and Capulet, and had them over and over. Buondelmonte, the stabbed jilt, was not even the first. I think that in Florence the people made themselves earlier a power in the land; I think that in Florence they were unique in holding what they got for so long as they did. That is a matter little to the argument, since the fall was all the greater when they fell. But where the Florentine temper showed was in the underthought which kept corporate Florence close to the road marked out, even while separate Florentines were rending and slicing each other. That is the one remarkable feature of Florentine history, which is otherwise as fretful, fidgety, and purposeless as that of one and all of her neighbours; and it is really remarkable, and admirable, that in all the discord and internal strife of her first three centuries, when house was against house, and trade against trade; when the river was a highway between enemies' camps, and a man fortified his house by bricking up the windows, or by burning his neighbour's; in spite of the red ruin of Monteaperto, the wet ruin of Altopascio (for if they reddened Arbia, they blackened Guanciana)[1]; when a party held power for a year at the price of exile for a lifetime, and no man could tell what edicts to-morrow would utter against him; through the mad disease of bells ringing to arms, or torches carrying death by night from quarter to quarter—through poverty, starvation, plague, shame, treachery, and excommunication, the commune of Florence threw out fingers over the valleys and into the recesses of the hills. By good or bad means they subdued the land to their own profit. Much of this conquest was forced upon them: they had dangerous neighbours. There were the Conti Guidi to the east, the Uberti and Alberti, the Pazzi and others—German robbers by origin, now feudatories of the Empire, but no less German and no less thieves. These and their like, perched in towers upon all the hills, had Florence (as you may say) by the windpipe. She would have been strangled if they had lived. She brought them in, made

[1] The great slaughter of this battle was not at Altopascio itself. The Florentines ran too fast. But Castracane caught them at Ponte a Cappiano and drowned most of them in the river.

citizens of them, and had to pay for that poor expedient. They did not cease to be feudatories, Germans or robbers because they had palaces in Florence; they ground down the burghers, dragged them into their family-feuds, set them all by the ears. But Florence weathered these things and tamed their barbarous doers. The Guelf-Ghibelline, Black and White discords were the Florentine Wars of the Roses; when arms were laid down there was hardly a great name alive. Read in Villani the lists; extinguished or fallen to mean estate, is the cry. That was the time for a Henry VII.; and Cosimo de' Medici, *Pater Patriæ*, was in waiting.

Fiesole, always a den of thieves, and Prato which lay to



THE ARNO, FLORENCE.

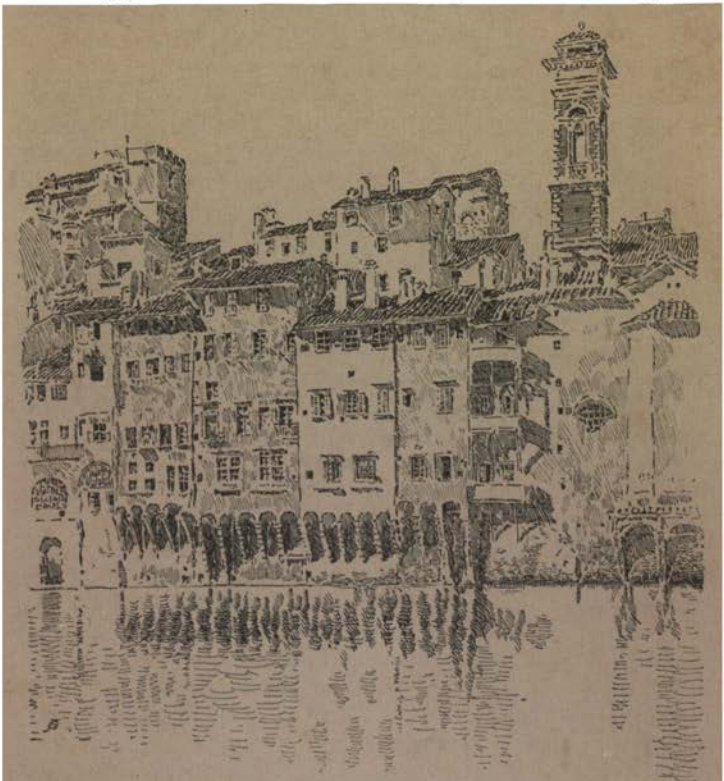
hand, fell as a matter of course. Pistoja had to be fought for: there was pressing need of this, apart from the value of holding such a gate into the Apennines. Pistoja could be reached by way of the Val di Nievole, and was accessible to Pisa or Lucca; indeed that was how Castruccio Castracane had reached it. The way in which he used it, as a base of deadly operations against Florence, showed the value and sealed the fate of the little city. Then came the turn of Arezzo, famous seat of Ghibellines and fighting bishops. The way to her up the Arno was marked by a series of castles,—Figline, Incisa, Monte di Croce, and others,—all of which had held enemies of Florence, and all reinforced by Arezzo. After the deaths of Bishop Guido Tarlati and of Castracane—fatal allies against

our ease!—Florence laid hold of Arezzo. Arezzo bit and kicked herself free; but she lay on a safe road to Rome, so Florence tried again. In 1384, when the whole state was in a life-and-death grip with the Great Snake of Milan, Arezzo was bought from a Flemish Condottiere for money and never let go again. Cortona was bought, Leghorn was bought, smaller towns surrendered—towns like Certaldo, San Gimignano, Montepulciano. Volterra was sacked and burned; Pisa, her bitterest enemy, was bought. Last to fall was Siena, the city of the Virgin; but it needed an alliance of Pope and Emperor with Cosimo the First, it needed brutal Spaniards and treacherous Frenchmen, a ruthless siege and horrible massacre to get it; but gotten it was. The Sienese, as Mr. Heywood records,[1] had "offended too great a man." So Florence went on, heedless of troubles in her own nest, never losing a chance and never letting go. It was an odd turn of events that the one people in all Tuscany she never could over-reach was that industrious, mild-mannered, gentle nation of the Val di Serchio. It needed Napoleon to win Lucca.

All this points to a long-winded if not too scrupulous race. But if you embark on a career of empery you will not wear gloves, and I declare much admiration for the Florentines. More praiseworthy still is it that, amid all their public and private griefs, they built up their city to be an image of their state. They began the Duomo, not long after the triumph of Campaldino, it is true, but in the very midst of the burnings and slayings with which Giano della Bella accomplished the Ordinances of Justice. The disastrous flood of 1333, which swept away all the bridges, knocked down St. Zenobio's column, and drowned the statue of Mars, was but a signal to this high-spirited commune to rebuild their town. Giotto began upon his Campanile; the Duke of Athens came and tyrannised, and was driven out; yet by 1378 the Duomo was completed, and before the century was done every great church you can now see in Florence was done or doing. This must needs have been a great people; and so it was. There was none other in Tuscany just like it. The Sienese spirit was a consuming and leaping fire: I doubt the record of bloodshed in that beautiful town would far exceed the Florentine, as their

[1] In his admirable little book (one of several) upon *The Palio of Siena.*

church, if they could possibly have built it, would have held Santa Maria del Fiore in its belly. The Sienese flung into the work, but the plague stayed them; nothing but a wall and vast empty windows remain of what they intended—the gaunt



OLD HOUSES ON THE ARNO.

outposts of a marble host. Neither pestilence nor waterfloods stayed the Florentines, whose fire was less generous, but more perdurable.

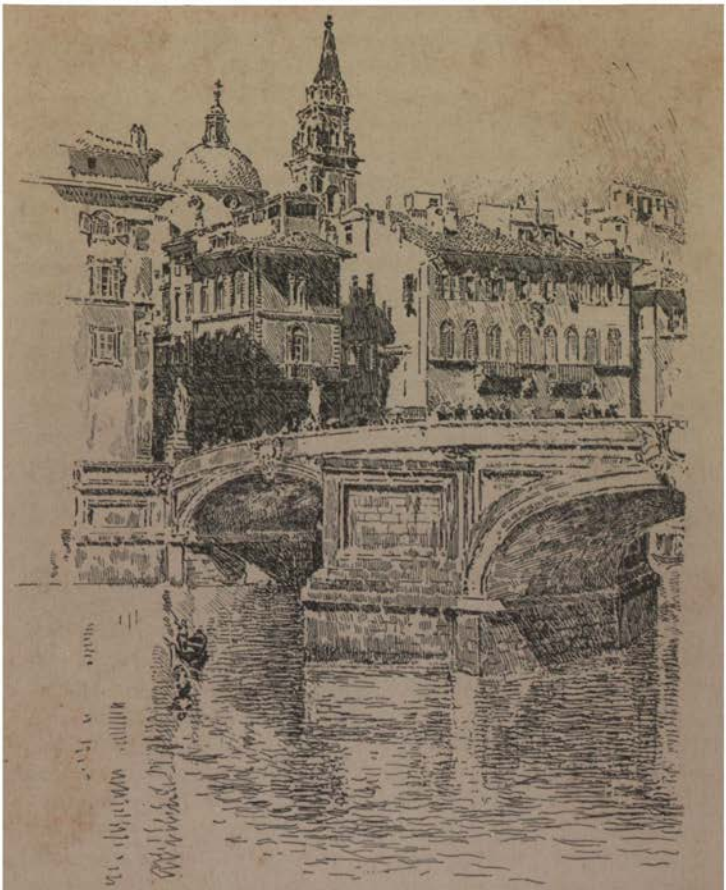
The Grand Duchy of Tuscany is of nine thousand square miles and no more; but you must reckon to find within it two dozen different nations. You may say with safety that every

city was a nation, and indeed that so every city still is. If I were to add that every *paese, paesetto, terra*, every village and hamlet contains a race of men apart from every other, with a peculiar pride, code of custom, religious trend, habit of mind, and that once upon a time the very quarters of each city were as jealous and rigid of their own as the cities themselves, I should not be far wrong. In Siena this obtains at this hour. If a girl of the Goose should wed with a man of the Shell, she will leave him on the day of the Palio, when Shell and Goose and Wave and Civet, and the thirteen other "nations" of the little city, contend with words and blows who shall win, or (more truly) who shall not win, the silken banner. In the villages about Florence, in Settignano and Corbignano, at Ponte a Ema and Grassina, and all the rest, the same thing prevails. To a Settignanese him of Corbignano is a hog; and so with the others. Dante not only hated, but scorned specifically every race in Tuscany. His proud nose seemed to know them by their smell, as he certainly knew Baldo d' Aguglione and Fazio of Signa. The Casentine swine, the Aretine lapdogs, the Pisan foxes, the jobbers of Lucca, and the featherheads of Siena, he hated with nicety, the bitter, great, sad man; but he only did after his kind. It is true he hated his own people more than any; but he did not scorn them so much. There is in this fact, if looked at rightly, the key to the history of Italy, which has never been and never will be a nation. If two little towns within ten miles of each other are as disparate and inimical as Pisa and Lucca, how shall you hope to make the Neapolitan lie down with the Piedmontese, or invite the Venetian to lap out of the Florentine dish? If Tuscany itself was never a nation—as essentially it was not, but rather an estate of the Medici's—how should Italy be?

To adventures proper in Tuscany, then, to reasonable entertainment of what is put before you, one thing is absolutely necessary—an inkling of the character of the people who expressed themselves in such directions. In history character is the key to the box, in art it is more likely the treasure in the box. Wild, fervent, adorable Tuscan race! their character was Destiny sure enough.

> Sempre la confusion delle persone
> Principio fù del mal della cittade,

says Cacciaguida to Dante. Where every townsman's hand was against his neighbour the city was at the mercy of the most ruthless hand; and if, as mostly was the case, there were



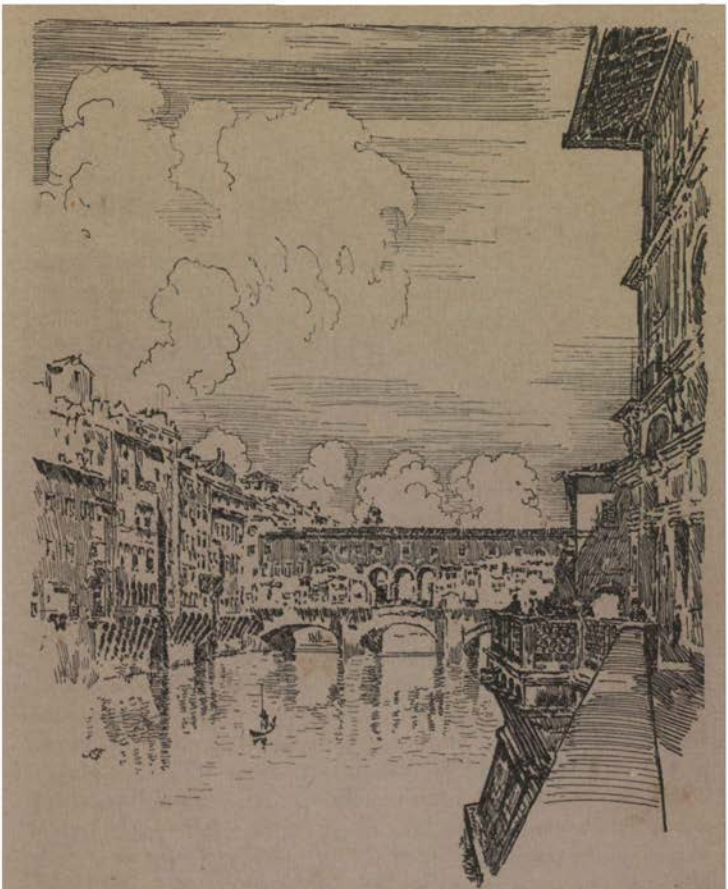
PONTE SANTA TRINITA, FLORENCE.

two hands equally strong, it must fall to a foreigner. So fell one after another all the towns in Tuscany to the strongest of the Medici; and so had fallen Florence herself to this most Florentine race. So much for character in Tuscan history;

in Tuscan art, if I am not mistaken, it is the root of the whole matter. Just as Tuscan landscape is by no means pre-eminently beautiful, so Tuscan art, judged by the standards of Venice, Holland, Spain, fails in respect of body, form, and abiding splendour, and Tuscan literature (Dante and Machiavelli always apart) is trivial and diffuse. The charm of all three is character: in landscape the distinct, clean colours, —the grey, the cool blue, the yellow,—the shapes of the trees, cypress, plane, and ilex, and above all the buildings, which make the Val d' Arno a garden; in art the candour of the child which every Tuscan is, though it makes parody of tragedy and mystery-play of the Christian verities, disarms the mind by stroking the heart. To look at a Tuscan picture to judge it is to feel your little son's hand at your chin at the moment you will scold. What can you do but give the sweet coax a kiss? And so in literature. There is a scent, an aroma, a pungency indefinable about the most frivolous Tuscan sonneteer, an orderly disposition in their everlasting histories, a fastidious choice in the conduct of their insipid novels—qualities which as a writer you must respect and as a reader admire; qualities which set rhymes and rhymesters apart. Other things may be better done, but not these things. A Tuscan is always himself. Of their sculpture, in which they excelled all the rest of the world, and their architecture I must speak later and more at large. Certainly my contention is not weakened by any example from them. But now of the Florentine character.

You may consider the Medici, until the era of foreign marriages set in, a typical Florentine house, just as you may see in Ghirlandajo—absorbed in the exquisite variety of napery and the outsides of ladies—a typical Florentine craftsman, or in Sacchetti, with his sharply splintered jests about burghers and their wives and confessors, a typical Florentine of letters. Even Dante—the fibre, not the fire—is true Florentine, with the parts and features magnified, but neither concealed nor distorted by genius. How happy was he—this by the way—playing, and playing consummately, with the ornaments of his poem, planning it, tricking it, embossing it! Here you see the bottom of childishness which is pure Tuscan: Dante's sublime simplicity was not a peculiar of his nor of his nation's; but to that account must be credited his deliberate movement,

his incisiveness and his steady pride. For the Florentine has a good conceit of himself; can be supercilious, but is not arrogant, is sharp-tongued, incisive, scornfully witty. He loves



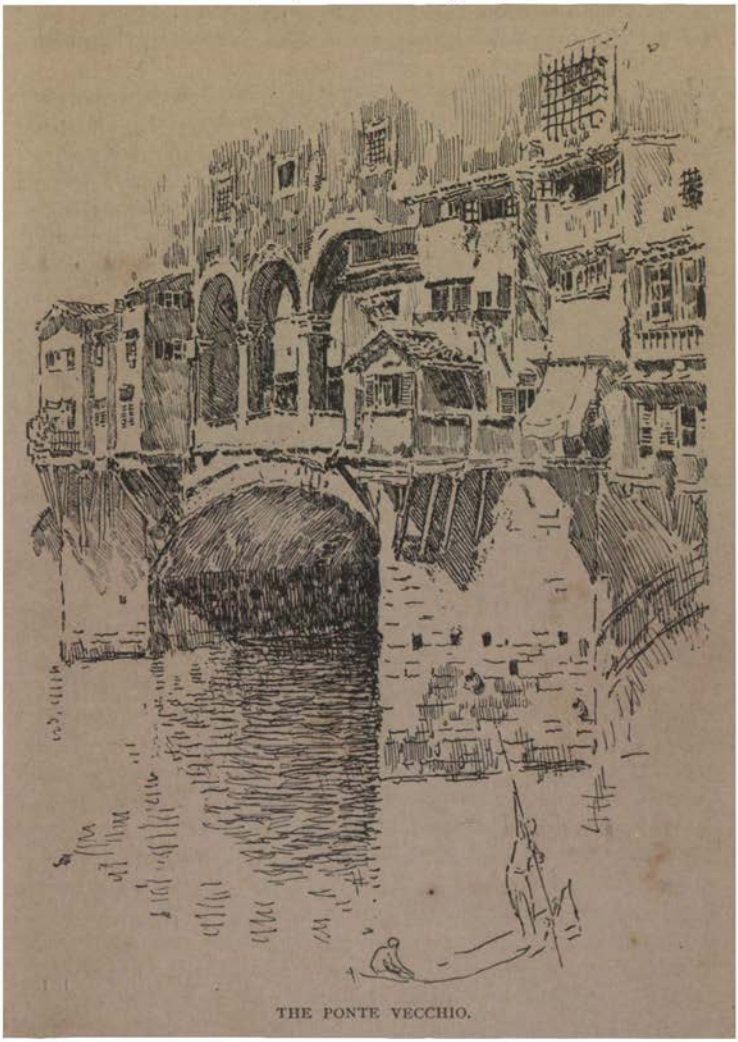
THE PONTE VECCHIO, FLORENCE.

nicknames, biting jests; the name he gives you will not be the less truthful because it stings. Dante was by no means singular in this faculty, though he had it out of all Florentine ratio. Villani could hit off a man or a measure with the

best of them, Sacchetti's gibes make his fame, and of all cynical, worldly-wise, caustic old statesmen, commend me to Cosimo the Elder. "You cannot govern by paternosters," was one of his famous maxims; and another was, "An ell of scarlet makes a burgess." He talked proverbs, just as another great Florentine, Farinata degli Uberti, talked them at the Congress of Empoli. They were considering the razing of Florence. How else shall we poor Ghibellines go in safety about our business? "The goat goes lame till she meets the wolf," says Farinata; and "Com' asino sape cosi minuzza rape"—As the ass is able so he bites carrots—and scorned them down.

Devout you will not find your Florentine; that he never was. He was rarely subject to those periodic surges of radiant belief, flood-tides of inspired practice, which swept over Siena and all that part of Tuscany which borders upon Umbria; and he had no relish for visionaries—political, religious, or what not. Burlamacchi of Lucca would have been hooted out of Florence; Saint Catherine herself would have been forgotten; Piero, the inspired comb-seller, who throve at Pisa, is an impossible figure for the Ponte Vecchio. There was Savonarola, I shall be told. Yes, there was Savonarola. But he captivated by his oratory more than by his faith; and the Florentines burned the monk when they were weary of the demagogue. Not imaginative by any means, but full of fancy; not mystical; most observant; charming, playful, innocent, half-quizzing, while half-tender; given to kindly tears and offices of kindness; apt to practical charity rather than theoretical; blunt-mannered without loss of dignity, and slovenly without loss of purpose; expert in head and hands to a wonderful degree—such is the Florentine, engrosser of Tuscany. He is conservative, slow in all that he does, howsoever well he may do it, and endlessly patient. Time to him is a fund to which there is no bottom; all he asks is a bucket and stout cord. So, however quick he may be to see his profit, he will be long in taking it, by no means afraid lest it may fall over-ripe by waiting. Imagine, in fine, a whimsical child with a passion for reality, who makes tangible his own weavings of impalpable embroidery, and delights in the work; then you have a Florentine artist, poet, man of letters. Imagine a frosty old financier, trading his talents and his

florins with shrewd judgment, relishing the chicane as much



THE PONTE VECCHIO.

as the usury with the zest of a boy, and laughing at himself while he gets his laugh of his neighbours; there is Cosimo

de' Medici, Father of his country, if it can be held the function of a father to make his children limp. Of Machiavelli, who played with theories as with chessmen, handling life and death, and Hell and Judgment as if they were all of a piece; of Lionardo da Vinci, painting mystery and making cages for grasshoppers; of Boccaccio, to whom love and lust, aspiration and digestion, were alike curious physical phenomena; of Luigi Pulci, of Lorenzo and his tribe of *dilettanti*—I would say the same thing. Children,—absorbed, precocious, delightful, preoccupied children, every one of them—a race whose measure of preoccupation is the measure of their success.

Despotism settled down upon them, in the true Florentine manner, very slowly; the first Medici felt their way, and turned their coats according as the wind of politics blew Black or White. Before their government began there had been every sort and no sort—anarchy, despotism, oligarchy, polyarchy, mob-rule, camp-rule, misrule, unrule. But the Florentines, whether led by the Greater Guilds or the Lesser, by Nobili, Popolo or Plebes, by Walter of Athens, Charles of Anjou, Charles of Valois, or Charles of France, the Florentines (I say) pursued their commune's profit and ennoblement; and that, I say once more, is a marvel of history. It is a marvel you will have to divine for yourself as you can. To imagine this small, hardy, acquisitive, and inquisitive race seething at first in their close lanes and brimming over their little piazzas; to hear the bells clash for this party or that, Donati or Buondelmonti, Visdomini or Uberti, Cerchi or Neri, see the factions press and sway over the bridges in hot battle, the tossing pikes, the banners wagging like trees in a gale; to be abroad when the horrible news of Altopascio or (what was far worse) of the bankruptcy of the De' Bardi, or the glorious news of Campaldino came racing into town; to listen to the screamed words of some swart trader on a balcony, watch them hail the Duke of Athens for a god on Sunday and hound him out like a hog on Sunday fortnight; to understand how through all the trick and veer of party wind the stanch old burghers and their dames—Donna Berta and Ser Martino—close-capped, twinkling, their hands folded in their cloaks, traded in the markets, and sent their wool and their florins to the Low Countries, and prospered while their city sweated

blood; to observe how custom—prim, old-fashioned custom of marriage and filial piety—outlasted every government and has not gone yet; once more, to tell how little by little the old walls gave way, and the close, four-square town spread out like brocade, and over against San Giovanni, the little white

TOWER OF THE VIA DELL' OCHE.

church like a tent, Brunelleschi reared his tulip-dome, Giotto threw towards heaven his staff of dawn-colour; how Giovanni di Averardo de' Medici's plain ashlar house would not hold his son Cosimo, and Cosimo's palaces were found too straight for his grandsons; how Albizzi, Strozzi, Pitti, Tornabuoni felt their feet and tilted against the Medici, and one after another

went down;—all this, which is the blood of history, must be gleaned with pains from such fields as there are, and cannot be divined from what is left standing. The stumps of a few old towers, two or three old churches, and one old house, are almost all the stones to tell the tale of what was the staple of Florence. Dante is the best and surest way; being of the centre himself, his force is centripetal. He will take you there if you come within the scope of his book.

The battle of Campaldino in 1287, which almost annihilated the Ghibellines, was the highest point of the Florentine republic. There were sore years ahead—Altopascio, the French occupation, the Duke of Athens, and other griefs a many. But the nobles fell at Campaldino, and that was the first step upwards of the Medici. Their chance came when old Cosimo was exiled and returned triumphant, and was sealed to them when Lorenzo escaped the Pazzi knife. In 1476 when they murdered the Sforza in Milan, the Pope mourned the death of Peace. He did well; but the life of the Medici was then good for three hundred years. With firm government, Florence, being what she was, could not but grow. It was perhaps her fortune—at least she thought so when they were all out—that the ruling house produced, in its cadet branch (when the elder went out in a murdered negro bastard), a line of mainly honest, dull princes. The vainglory of a great marriage—alliance with Austria—betrayed them. The Hapsburg lip and the feeble Hapsburg obstinacy made a sardonic end of the Medici in Cosimo III., the hagridden bigot, and Gian Gastone, a padded, bewigged mask of a man.

CHAPTER VIII

OF TROY, OF FIESOLE, AND ROME

Favoleggiava con la sua famiglia
Dei Trojani, di Fiesole, e di Roma.
15 *Par.* 126.

IF the apple of Eve sent men out into Asia, it was Helen's fruit that filled Europe with heroes. For when tall Troy went down, and the scamper began, both of them who ran home, and of them who ran from it, the progeny of Priam travelled far and wide, seeking friendly soil; and wherever they settled—such was their inalienable prerogative—they became kings. This is why Hector is the favourite above Achilles, and both Chaucer and Shakespeare sided with Troilus against Diomede, because, in a sense, we are all nephews of these peers. Thus were Germany, France, England provided with rulers, but not Fiesole. Fiesole declared herself older than the oldest. The grandfather of the man who first built Troy was Atlas, king of Fiesole. This is a proud arrogation. Rome was contented with Ascanius, Siena with Remus, Padua with Antenor, Venice with Priam the younger—Trojans all and good men; **The stock of Troy.**

as for Florence, a friend of Julius Cæsar was honourable parent enough. But for Fiesole nothing would do but the root of the whole world's title, the very well-spring of the Fountain of Honour. This is as if a man were to claim descent, not from Adam, but from the worm who made fecund the soil whereof God made him.

Dante's housewife of the old fashion, spinning her yarn and wondrous genealogies together, had much to say of those great days when nations walked the fair fields of earth on two legs apiece, choosing where they should settle, and beget, and have kingdoms. This was the round of it—how the sons of King Atlas went to the East and reared up Troy, then (being scattered by the Greeks) his grandsons came back and made a greater Troy, even Rome the city. For Atlas begat Italus, Dardanus, and Sicanus. Dardanus new-built Troy, which took its name from his grandson Troius. The son of Troius was Ilion—whence another of Troy's names—and of Ilion, Laomedon. All this was in the days of Hercules and Jason, done long before Hector stalked the ramparts, or Achilles busked him with the maids in Scyros. Great fabling! of which our tales of Arthur, and Charlemagne, and Perceforest were pale reflections; for certainly you cannot carve greater pieces for your game than realms as men walking, nor could any marriage of prince and princess, which the fairies might bless, have such fortunate issue as that portentous coupling of Æneas of Troy and Lavina, the daughter of King Latinus.

But for the origins of Florence you must seek a lowlier plane. Fæsulan beginning could not be

denied, though all good Florentines affected to be ashamed of it. "Note this," says Villani in

TORRE DELL' ARTE DELLA LANA.

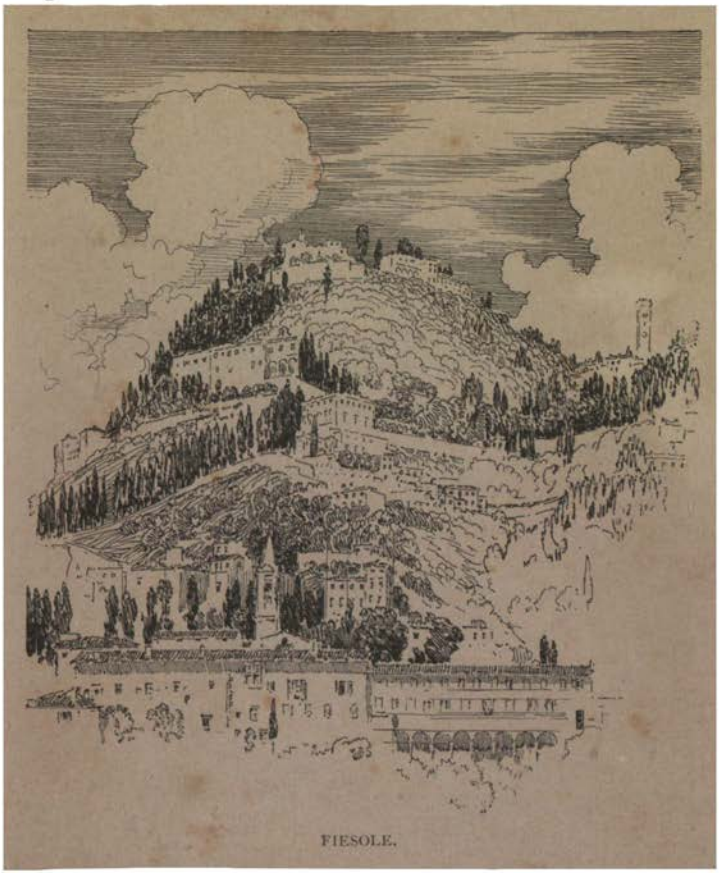
a peroration, "for why the Florentines are everlastingly at war and discord with each other;

which is no marvel, being drawn and engendered from two peoples so contrary, inimical, and divers in custom as were those noble, valiant Romans and the Fæsulans, harsh and brutal in war." From this discord, from this malignant conjunction, comes the name of the city. Florence, Firenze, Fiorenza, he tells you, is compounded of the Latin *Florum Ensis*, the Sword of Flowers, the Blossoming Blade. And why? Because the Romans and the Fæsulans, having compounded their quarrels, agreed to lie down together in a flowery field by Arno. When Villani adds that this field was chosen, and first dwelt in, by the noble Roman Florinus, he has, you perceive, that old sow Etymology firmly by the ear, the tail, and one leg. If the name of our city cannot be derived from one of these—the sword, the flowers, or the aptly-named Roman—then (in Heaven's name) derive from all three! Thus the Florentine chroniclers picked up history from nicknames, which is coming to be our modern practice.

The Roman seed.

I suppose Villani's story is well known. When Quintus Metellus had crushed Catiline and his host in the Campo Piceno, "con tempesta impetuosa ed agra," he went up to punish Fiesole for her harbourage of the great rebel, met that nation in the valley of the Arno, and was discomfited at the first assault. For a second he laid more careful plans. A part of his force he detached and gave in charge of the noble Fiorino, who was to cross the river at Rovezzano and take the Fæsulans in the rear. It is not clear by any means why Metellus was across Arno; but across it he was. Fiorino did his duty, with

results momentous to this history. The men of Fiesole were routed; a part was cut to pieces, a part fled home to the hill. The Romans sat



FIESOLE.

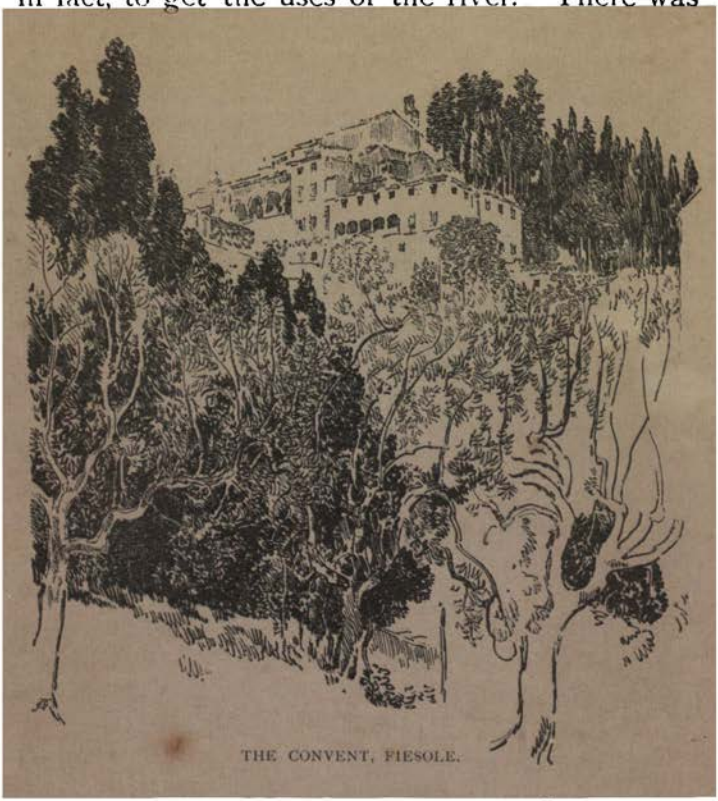
down before the city, built and trenched a camp, and sending to Rome for Julius Cæsar, Cicero and others, awaited the starvation of the enemy. But this did not occur; the Fæsulans had stout hearts, the Romans wearied, many returned to

Rome, and of these Cicero may well have been one. The noble Fiorino and his company remained. That entrenched camp which he had made became old, square Florence; and if he himself did not give name to the city, flowers of some sort did. "For," as my author says, "Fiorino died in that very spot, who was of chivalry the flower; and in the place and in the fields about it for ever sprang flowers and lilies. Wherefore the greater number of the inhabitants agreed to call their city Floria, as if it had been built up among flowers, that is, among many delightful things." This is a charming story, which gives one as much insight into the good Villani as into Florentine beginnings.

Then there is Benvenuto Cellini's account, I think, the best of all. That immortal ruffian says directly that Fiorino was his lineal ancestor. His name in full was Fiorino da Cellino. It is quite true, he allows, that Fiorino's quarters were on the site of the present city, but his name was given to it in a more natural way. His friends in the army, having frequent occasion to consult him upon matters of business or pleasure, got into the way of saying, whenever any difficulty arose, "Let us go down to Fiorino's," "Andiamo a Fiorino." Therefore, when it came to giving a local name to this new Rome, no better occurred to Cæsar than Fiorenze, which is, as we should say, "Fiorino's place." So Benvenuto da Cellino, the too handy man, braved it in the Florence of Duke Alexander with the blood of its founder singing in his veins. This is the best account I have yet learned of the origin of Florence.

Benvenuto's account.

Professor Villari and the learned moderns, while varying in points of detail, accept most of these propositions. Florence was an Etruscan settlement, an offshoot of Fiesole, a lower town, in fact, to get the uses of the river. There was



THE CONVENT, FIESOLE.

certainly a Roman colony there. Julius Cæsar, Cicero, Fiorino, may or may not have come; Charlemagne too, whose presence is testified by a long inscription on the church of the SS. Apostoli, may or may not have come. The Tuscans are great lapidarists to this day, and a legend is none

the worse for being chiselled. What happened afterwards is clear. The lower town prospered, the upper town did not. The upper town took to thieving, being aided therein (*a*) by the presence of certain Germans, Ubaldini and others, and (*b*) by the fact that the lower town lay to hand. The lower town resented this; so in the year ten hundred and ten, in the time of the first Bavarian and first Henricus Cæsar, the Florentines, as they now were, took Fiesole by trick, but with humanity. They killed none but who resisted; to the rest they gave the choice—to live in Florence, or elsewhere in Italy than on their hill. Many came to Florence, and the arms were altered to party red and white. The red, with a white lily, was the old blazon which Florence had from Rome (says Villani), and the white was Fiesole's, which bore a crescent moon. A hundred years later the Rock of Fiesole, the *arx*, in fact, had to be destroyed. It had served certain gentlemen-thieves, Cattani, for purposes of rapine. What is extraordinary—or would be anywhere but in Tuscany—is that to this hour the Fæsulans are a race apart, as different from the Florentines as chalk from cheese.

Of the two strains in them the Florentines loved only the Roman. The Etruscan, to which they owed all their art and most of their wits, was nothing accounted of. The great deeds of Rome, which never lacked a trumpet to proclaim them, have dizzied later ears than Dante's and Villani's. But they dizzied theirs. It is enough reason for Villani that the Fæsulans were "ever rebel against Rome;" Dante, who could hate with the steady malignity

The holy breed.

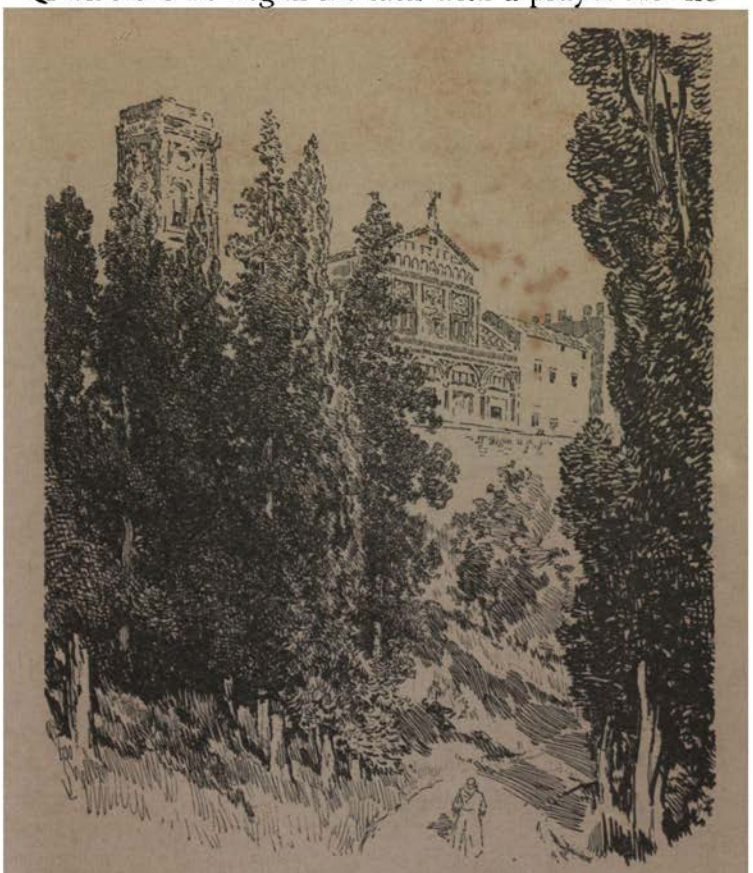
FIESOLE.

of the true Florentine, assailed them without reason :—

> That ancient, ingrate, spiteful stock
> Which from Fiesole came down,
> And savours yet of ridge and rock—

Without reason, say I ; for if a race is to be called ungrateful you must show for what their gratitude is due. And in another place, very much after his manner, he sees in the Black Guelfs the dung of Fiesole, and in the White, himself and his party, the "sementa santa" of imperial Rome. Of this "holy breed," truly, Florence could never have enough. It inspired Villani to search the Scriptures, it led Dante through the three great kingdoms of the Dead. Both of them were in Rome for the Jubilee of Pope Boniface. Villani, "beholding the great and ancient stuff of which she was fashioned; reading the histories and noble deeds of the Romans written by Virgil, and Sallust, and Lucan, by Titus Livius, and Valerius, and Paulus Orosius, and other masters of history, who wrote down the little things as well as the great ones for a memory and example to those who were to come,—took style and plan from them, a poor disciple, unworthy of so high a business." But, withal, Florence was in his eyes "daughter and creature of Rome," *figliuola e fattura di Roma*, and upon her climb after great achievements. With this thought he heartened himself to be delightful, useful, comfortable to the Florentines in their great aims ; the which they should surely attain, "seeing they are descended from a noble stock and a valiant nation, as were the ancient

worthy Trojans and the weighty noble Romans." Therefore he began his task with a prayer for the



SAN MINIATO, FLORENCE.

help of Jesus Christ. To Dante Rome was so sacred that to slight her was a blasphemy :—

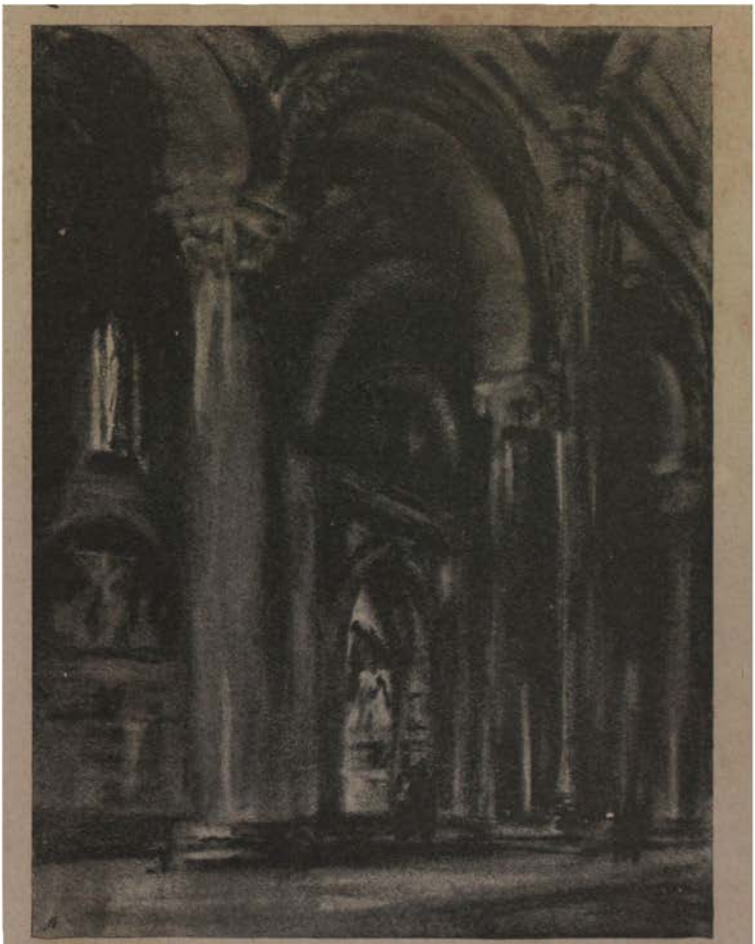
> This holy stock who robs or maims
> With blasphemy offends his God,
> Who fashioned it for His high aims.

It is doubtful what he would have made of Christianity without Roman sanction. But—the longer seer than Villani—he knew what Rome implied for the Latin races. Whether the Florentines were Roman of the half or the whole blood, Rome must prevail.

It is all one now. Of Etruscan Florence and of Roman no vestige worth the name is above-ground. Cyclopean walls stand at Fiesole, a Roman amphitheatre baked pale by the sun, happy in old age with sprouting toad-flax, quick with lizards and cicalas. The little town has a savage air within and without, and a family likeness not to be mistook to Cortona, Perugia, and dreadful Volterra. Wheresoever you may be in the lower Valdarno you will see Fiesole standing as it did, a ragged menace to the plain, grey and serried on a grey hill. The amenities and good fortunes of Florence have banished all this from her fruitful midst: you must look for what is to be had in the Museum, the best in Europe, I believe. There you will see what the Etruscans could do in the ways of art, and obtain, as Herr Baedeker madly cries, "an insight into their gloomy and realistic disposition." It is my personal belief that the Etruscans, like the Florentines, having surrounded themselves with an unseen world full of terrors and traps for the mortal, proceeded to forget as much of it as possible—to portray the Gods as fair men and women, and to mourn their dead with facile tears, alike the happy and unhappy. They "took the day" like the rest of us, and did not cut down the rose until they were obliged. And if I desired to study the art of

Fiesole.

Giotto and Donatello and Matteo di Giovanni to its root, I should haunt the Etruscan Museum in



SAN MINIATO, FLORENCE.

the Via della Colonna more than I have done. But of such things there may be more to say later.

The walls of Fiesole are Etruscan, its theatre is Roman, and its church Romanesque; yet noble as this last is, or has been, there is a nobler by Florence, and within the walls yet one other, to which I invite attention as the most venerable in this land. For Fiesole's church looks across Arno to Miniato's, and each can see her sister in the valley. Between the three the whole story has been said, and by them been watched from any beginning you can profitably choose. Each had been built before the Countess Maud died,[1] and before Cacciaguida looked upon the worthies of Florence; therefore, before Florence herself saw a chance of being a free commune, these three linked churches declared God. Climb, then,

> A man destra, per salire al monte
> Dove siede la chiesa che soggioga
> La ben guidata sopra Rubaconte;

and thence go down to San Giovanni. All of Rome that lasted in Florence is in these buildings.

San Miniato.

In that airy chapel, which Michelozzo built into the wall of San Miniato, rests the young Cardinal of Portugal, a priest and, what is more, a virgin, who died young. He has, for the comfort of his blessed dust, one of the blithest, most delicate tombs in the world: there was no "gloomy and realistic disposition" in Michelozzo. Rossellino's Mother of Heaven turns her pointed chin benignly down that she may smile upon the sleeping lad. The

[1] In 1115. This is the date usually given to the rise of the Tuscan Communes; as a fact, they got their chance when the Emperor Henry fell out with Pope Gregory the Great.

Gesulino gives him blessing; angels and little naked boys support the bier. This dead boy looks as if the latest breath had but now fluttered out of his nostrils, as if with that last sigh of content he had turned his cheek to the pillow and closed his eyes for long sleep. Above him in the cupola, which may figure but does not

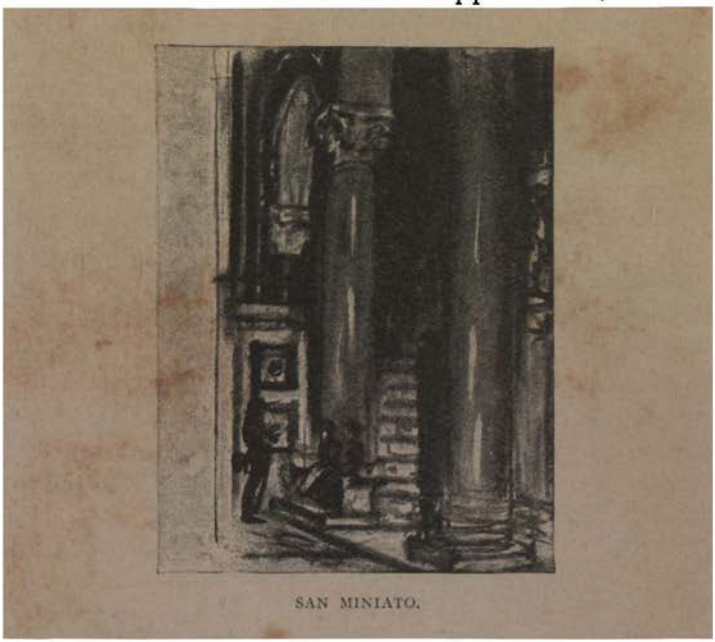
SAN MINIATO.

attempt to image the sky, in blue and white on green, are the Della Robbia virtues—seven of them—like trim girls; and before his tired eyes, if he could be induced to open them once more, Baldovinetti has an angel in brocade upon a field of old green and crimson, playing the immortal drama of the Annunciation. Thus you may find without offence, in a Romanesque church of absolute dignity and reticence, this chapel, neo-classic

but of exquisite proportion and colour, and be conscious of little or no difference between them. There is just such another in Florence, I mean the Pazzi chapel in Santa Croce cloister. But Santa Croce is a Gothic church, and the conjunction jars.

The truth is, that the difference between the Lombard builders of the eleventh and the Tuscan builders of the fifteenth centuries is only one of degree. Brunelleschi, Cronaca, Michelozzo knew less and thought less about the Christian verities, but what they knew and what they thought went no further for all its addition of four hundred years. The Lombard builders could not look beyond this world, and could imagine no other where the Roman concept of law did not prevail; the Neo-Classicists *would* not look beyond it. In a manner of speaking, these Romanesque churches of San Miniato and San Giovanni, and with them the Cathedral of Pisa, express an earth-bred, earth-fed, earth-abiding religious sense; and so in a manner of speaking do the neo-classic. That is to say, they express nothing less finite. In the Roman basilica sat Tiberius Cæsar or his prætor, in the Romanesque basilica it is Christus Cæsar, Christus Nimbipotens, who sits—He or His prætor—judging the quick as surely as He shall judge the dead. Below His tribune, in an open crypt, lies His justified witness. They called this place the Confessio, which indeed it was. In San Miniato it is of extreme beauty, of slight and almost Saracen grace: six rows of thin columns, four deep, hold arches lightly horse-shoed; there is a low stone altar in the middle, and under it the

bones (or some of them) of Miniatus, eldest son of the king of Armenia, who suffered under Decius even unto decapitation. Thereupon he took his head in his guiltless hands, and walked dry foot over Arno back to his hermitage on the hill; and there he died, and there was buried and revered.[1] Then there is the upper choir, which



SAN MINIATO.

contains the tribune, rich in *opus alexandrinum*, mosaic and marble. Its windows are of sliced onyx; everything about it befits the kingly seat. And the king is more here than elsewhere, be sure, for nothing points any other way than to the Presence. The church is set solidly on the earth where He solidly sits. Tall marble

[1] See G. Villani, i. 57, for this delightful tale at large.

columns bear up the arches of the nave, the roof is flat and heavily beamed; all the lines are horizontal, all the weight rests square on the foundations; there is no outside support, no soaring, no tracery, no vaulting. What do we know of mansions in the skies? Spacious is this place, airy, full of light, self-sufficing, self-supporting. You are to imagine nothing, look up for nothing more. All that you need is here. What you learn by the inside by the outside you can surmise—severity, a cold splendour of ivory, black and green. Atop of all is a bronze eagle, above the middle window a gold mosaic. Imperial religion, Roman pride and stately order; Christ in judgment, come to His own; not the Christ of poor Brother Francis and the bleeding feet. Such is the Church of the faith to which Florence was born, which the good Countess Maud mortified by her vexed legacy, and which Dante called upon high Henry to restore.

When you come out of this weighty temple and cool your forehead on the terrace, you may see below you, as in a cup, a tumbled pool of brown, purple, and yellow, the city herself, with two great domes and two tall towers dominating all. There also you will find testimony of a religion no less different from your own than this of old Rome. Look west of the tower of Giotto, whose colour seen from here is that of young fire; between it and San Lorenzo you will see a plain mound of building, the white tent-roof of San Giovanni, sister of this church, and all that remains of the Florence which Dante walked. Extreme east and west of it you have two spires, one like a needle, the other like a

spear, with a bunch about the blade. They signify the new heaven and new earth which

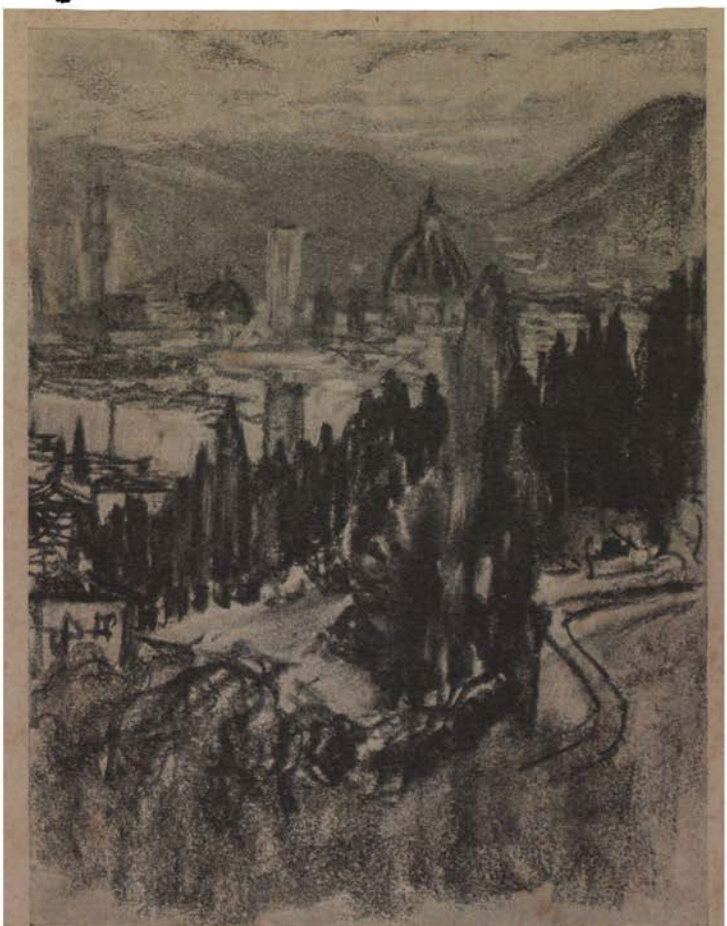
SAN GIOVANNI.

Francis and Dominick came to reveal. Out of them and of what they mean grew visible Florence.

The little octagon—all that is left of *Fiorenza quadrata* and the Countess—looks dwarfed and anæmic beside that glowing church of the Flower, and the citron, rose, and dark of Giotto's lovely shaft; to learn its true significance in the aspect of the older town one must see the position it occupies in such a picture as the *Nozze Adimari* in the Accademia. In that day, as in Dante's and Villani's, it was the Cathedral, purged of all but the memory of its former patron, the god Mars. In the wedding picture you may see the tigerish little building stand apart from the Gothic Bigallo, and pre-eminent over all the gaudy corbelled houses and towers. To this very day, to my own fancy, it has supreme distinction among all the buildings of Florence. It has, what San Miniato has also, the sanity, the elegance, the large disposition, antique order and grace—qualities which are the peculiar of Romanesque. Small, it makes itself felt; half-buried in the rubbish of our day—touts, pedlars, tourists, photographers, and lecturers—its serenity bathes the eyes. It is a rest to look upon its smooth, rubbed face. Fine proportions, venerable memories, are responsible for much of this, no doubt, but good building more. When hope ceases to be bounded by sight, stone and lime are no better than mud and wattles. And the builders of this church and the like of them, though they may have demanded a monument more perdurable than brass, hardly cared to expect it. When God could of a verity be lodged in a church, made anew every day, and adored upon an altar, the work must needs be of the best. So San Giovanni is still worthy of its

San Giovanni.

Guest, though the tourists do not inquire if He be there. There, more than elsewhere, I believe



FLORENCE FROM SAN MINIATO.

Him to be. I like to think, when I am in Florence, looking at the havoc time and trade have wrought,

that San Giovanni and what it signifies, having outlived Leo X. and all that he signified, may still shine, white and calm, upon a saner world than ours. But I become a philosopher. Think rather of San Giovanni, not (as most visitors are taught to think) as a monstrance of three bronze doors, but as the august emblem of Dante's Florence, unimpeachable for what it is, the universal mother of the place; where Cacciaguida was made "Christian and Cacciaguida," and Folco Portinari's girl was named Beatrice, and Piero di Cosimo de' Medici brought a swarthy, squab-nosed little monster and had him called Lorenzo, after the patron of his quarter. The great font, wherein Dante dived after a drowning initiate, is gone; the altar is cold, the candlesticks are pinchbeck, and the candles are made of wood; up in the cold fog you see dim figures of prophets and patriarchs stand like mountains in the mist. They looked once at the Countess of Tuscany at her prayers. The devout pilgrim must content himself with them, and the pavement, and what sacred air may remain.

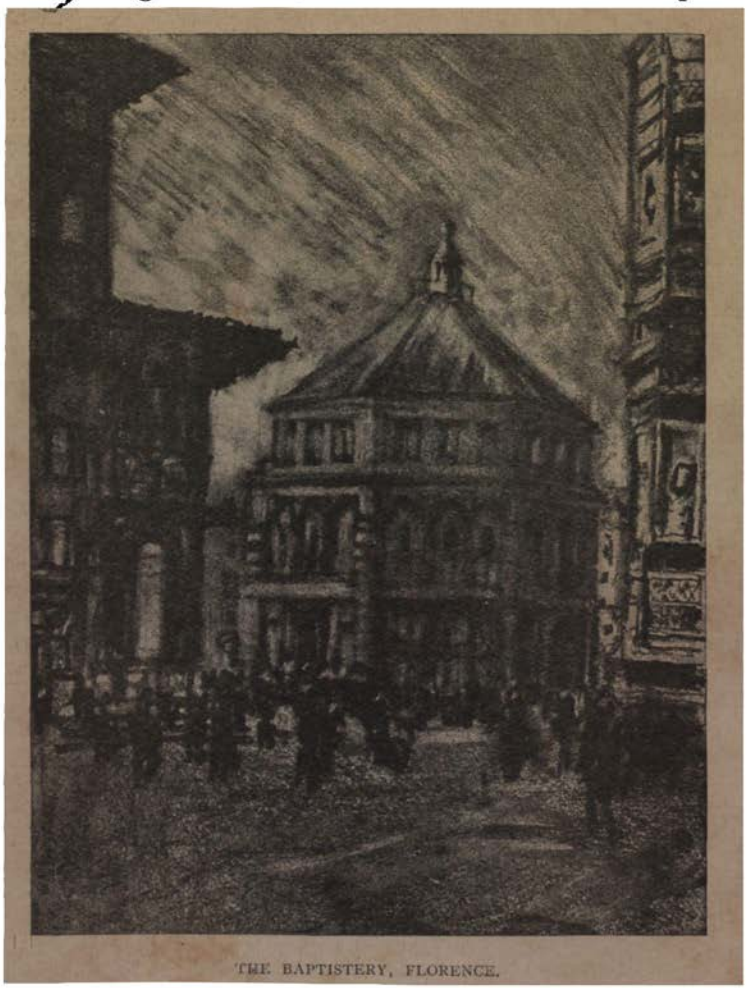
The great Countess died and was buried at Pisa by the side of her mother. She—the mother, I mean—lies in that very sarcophagus whose slim Hippolytus and deep-breasted Phædra made Niccolo Pisano dream dreams, with this inscription carved amid the Ephebi and flying horsemen:—

The Countess Maud.

> Quamvis peccatrix Sum Domna vocata Beatrix:
> In tumulo missa Jaceo quæ Comitissa—

which, for a blend of pride and piety in irony, is hard to be beat. The urn would have more

seemly held the Countess's own dust; for, according to Villani, she lived as chaste as Hip-



THE BAPTISTERY, FLORENCE.

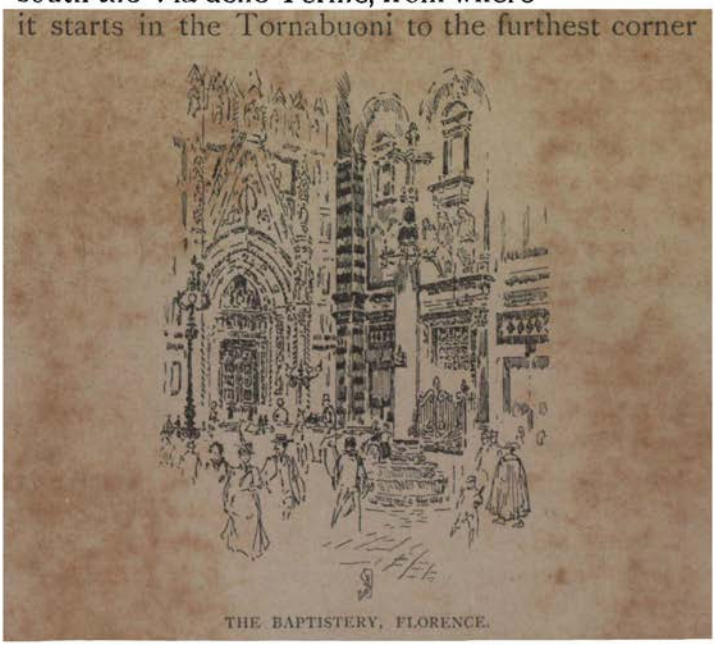
polytus, though unwillingly. She was legendary, and almost apotheosised in his day. He makes

her daughter of the Emperor of the East and an Italian gentlewoman, of "noble manners and great descent." Upon report of his virtues, she sent for and married a certain Guelf of Suabia; but she married him by proxy as became the vice-reine of Cæsar. Herein she was unhappy; a "natural frigidity," or (as he pretended) the acts of the devil, made Guelf a stranger to her bed. Which discovering, the Countess enacted this great scene. Into her chamber she went, and caused her women to strip her of ornament; her diadem, orb, and sceptre, her purple and pall; more, she made them loosen her hair, and leave her clothed in nothing but that—no longer a Countess and ruler of all Tuscany, but a bare and (if we may trust the chronicler) a beautiful woman. Then she sent for her husband Guelf. "Neither my majesty nor the potency of Satan is here in this room, but only I, Maud, your wife. Come, then, husband, and wed me." But Guelf never moved. Then said the Countess,—with a fine change from "I" to "we"—"Thou hast presumed to deceive our grandeur; for the honour of which we choose to pardon thee. But we bid thee without any tarrying depart and seek thine own house. The which thing if thou delay to perform, thou mayest not escape without danger of thy life." So then he confessed the truth and made haste to go to Suabia. The Countess kept her counsel, but forswore worldly solace, devoted herself to works of piety, and when she died left all Tuscany upon the altar of Saint Peter, a legacy to the Pope. The strict fact, that she could not so dispose of a fief of the empire, made a strife in Italy which never ended until Charles V.

went into Yuste cloister. Out of that strife arose the Florentine commune and the tyranny of the Medici alike.

If you take for your north parallel the Via de' Cerretani, from the corner of the Via Rondinelli to that of the Via de' Servi; and your south the Via delle Terme, from where it starts in the Tornabuoni to the furthest corner

Old Florence.



THE BAPTISTERY, FLORENCE.

of the Palazzo Vecchio; for your east parallel the Piazza San Firenze and Via del Proconsolo to the corner of the Via de' Servi; and for your west the Tornabuoni and Rondinelli aforesaid; if you stand at the junction of the Centro with the Via Calimara, so that you can see in a straight line from the Baptistery to the Mercato Nuovo, from the Strozzi Palace down the Corso—then you

will have under your eyes the Florence which christened Cacciaguida and went out to fight with the Countess Maud, and took the time of day from the belfry of the Badia on the walls. You will be in the very middle of it. Villani lingers with fondness upon it, its likeness to Rome, even in the titles and sites of its churches, and upon the austere, tight-laced lives of its citizens, their obedient sons and chaste daughters. That was the Florence of Dante's dilection too :—

> Skin-girt, bone-buckled, I saw pass
> Bellincion Berti, and his wife
> Come back unpainted from her glass.

Peace, sobriety, and shamefastness were the virtues in vogue; you married your girls at twenty and dowered them with a hundred *lire*. You kept your shop and counted your pelf; you fought when you must, and since every hill about you held a robber and his horde, you had to fight to live; your women stayed at home and looked after your daughters until you announced a wedding. Then some tall girl or other, whom you had kept in that still, passionless house, a grown baby of twenty years, without falter or blush held out her hand. Just such another as her old block of a father took it in his, having pocketed the money and written out his quittance, and away went the maid to wear the coif and bear the fardel of women. Fine old Roman days! But dowry or no, that same Bellincion Berti made a great marriage for his girl. Gualdrada she was called, and was seen and desired by the Emperor Otto at her prayers in Santa Reparata. The Emperor asked her for a kiss,

and being denied, claimed that he had the right to salute his subjects. "No man," says Gualdrada, "shall have that right of me but my husband." The Emperor gave her great praise, and bade Count Guido the Old take her and kiss her. This Count Guido the Old was lord of all the Upper Arno, a greatly descended man, son of the last survivor of the tyrants of Romagna. Gualdrada gave him four sons for his kisses, whose names were Guglielmo and Ruggieri, and Guido and Tegrimo, and from whom came much trouble, fighting, rapine, and the like, in later days. But of another sort were the stock in four-square Florence. You may class the continence of Maud and Gualdrada with the continence of Scipio. They, if you please, are of the "Sementa Santa," these men and women; and so is Dante, their stern descendant, and the church which still stands with his book to bear witness if I lie. No city need have stronger title-deeds.[1]

APPENDIX

THE STAPLE—NATURAL HISTORY OF DONNA BERTA AND SER MARTINO

DONNA BERTA and Ser Martino, whose house and shop are in the Via Calimala, not a stone's throw from Or San Michele, have six sons and five daughters. These are their names:—Romualdo, and Bertuccio, and Corradino, Bonventuro, Serafino, and Arcagnolo, young men; Caterina and Orsola, Liperata, and Collegiata, and Beata, maids. For all of these, and more than all, Ser Martino prepared his wife on the day

[1] See more of this in the Appendix to this chapter.

he took her home, on the very stroke of the last guest's departure. At that moment of heart-beating—too wild for natural tears, when a girl might expect to feel a man's arms like a tide engulf her knees, and climb ever up and up to float her into a new world; or when a strenuous lover would have clasped his dear to his heart, and sworn that if she would reward him she would never repent it—at that auspicious moment Ser Martino took his wife Berta by the hand and showed her where everything lay in the house. The granaries, the wood-store, the flour-box, the wine-cellar; the linen-presses, the coffers of his clothes and hers; his shoes, his slippers, and furred boots for winter; the jars of sweet oil of the three kinds that there are; the good hams hanging to the rafters, the strung onions, the store of garlic, spices, and dry herbs. Upstairs and down, in cellar and sollar, in kitchen and larder, in pantry and hall; with every grain of his gear he made her acquaint. This done he led her up to the chamber and shot the bolt of the door. He showed her here such valuables as he had—and they were many. Silver tankards and silver platters, chains of price, ostrich eggs and unicorn's horns, blood of phœnixes congealed into tears, a gold reliquary with one of the nail-pairings of Saint Macarius of Egypt, and other precious things which it would be tedious to enumerate. Next he showed her the bed, a large bed raised upon two steps from the floor. "This is our bed, wife," said he, "in the which I desire that you shall spend more time than I. Not that I would have you sluggish and rise late—far from it. But you will have many children—more than Leah, more than Rachel, more than the mother of Zebedee's family. I am not one of those to be controlled by their mothers, who think marriage bad for the head. My mother—God be merciful!—is in Paradise, or not far from the portals. She was a woman who must have always the best of everything, and you may be certain that she will never be content with anything less than a high seat in the topmost heaven. Therefore yours will be no case to say, 'Good for thee, sparrow, thou hast no mother-in-law,' as said the wife of Messer Aldobrando, condemned to a solitary couch. For there will be no hen-sparrow in the world more gratified than thou." Donna Berta, whose age was exactly fourteen, cast down her eyes and murmured something about

obedience. She had always obeyed her natural parents; it had never been possible to do anything else. There should be no difficulty in obliging this new master, she thought. And she found there was none. He was a strict, though not ferocious husband; he very seldom beat her, and sometimes talked to her about other people's affairs, though, naturally,

HALL OF THE WOOL MERCHANTS, FLORENCE.

not of his own. One of the first things he taught her, after this first and indispensable lesson, was that she must never set foot in the shop, never look at his ledgers or know where he kept his strong-box, and never ask him where he had been or what he had been doing. Being entirely dull, blankly ignorant, and very good, she took all these injunctions soberly and in honest faith, and proved an admirable wife in bed and

at board, upstairs and down. She bore him sixteen children, of whom five died young; and now you may see her, in mid-fourteenth-century, a handsome, staid, broad-bosomed woman, still the upper servant in the house, and still a stranger to the shop, in the Via Calimala. Clamour in the Council chamber, hue-and-cry, fighting in the streets, foreign wars, foreign tyrants—all the crash and din of the noisy Tuscan world have passed over her like summer storms. She may have listened to the wild bells and hoarse voices which followed them (beginning with a dull roaring afar off, and swelling and swelling till the light of day seemed to flicker at it); she may have run to the window and leaned out to see the Caroccio go swinging by, escorted by running mobs, or the pikemen and arquebusiers file singing towards the Prato gate; for frenzied moments she may have exerted her plump hand to bar the street door against drunken Burgundians, or some daring French knight spying after maids. At such times she would cry them a bad Easter, and cross herself vehemently and patter her prayers. But mainly she lived placidly, sewing or spinning with her daughters in the front room, walking abroad very rarely after morning mass, seeing all she wanted of Florence from the cushioned window-sill, half hidden by the shutters, which gave on to the Calimala.

Of greater descent than her master—for she was an Acciajoli, and her father's houses together made a palace—she accepted her position, and looked loyally at his climbing-feats to gain places which had been hers by prerogative right. From Capetudine of his Guild to be Camarlingo, then Gonfalonier; chosen for Podestà of Poppi in the Casentino, one of the Greater Council, Prior of the city for his term, sent upon embassies here and there—once to Perugia, once to Viterbo, once, indeed, as far as Venice (whence he brought back stories of turbaned men and camels, and streets where the tide flowed twice a day): all these things were added unto Ser Martino; and Donna Berta, who might have waited upon the Emperor's lady or been abbess of a convent by this time, exulted at every fresh triumph, and plumed herself among her neighbours, like the good burgher's wife she had become. A jaunt into the gardens on May day, when perhaps she would go as far as Rovezzano on a mule's back, a visit to the miracle-play at Corpus Christi—when they did

the Passion and Ascension of Christ under a starred blue awning in the Piazza Santa Croce—the amazing miracle of the Sacred Fire on Sabbato Santo, a marriage feast at a neighbour's, or a good funeral,—here were her yearly pleasures, for which she served Ser Martino faithfully, without hope or promise of any other reward than to see her sons with wives, to be ridded of her daughters by marriage or the veil, and to have a place upon her husband's monument, when she would be carried feet foremost to the Annunziata and laid by his side below the pavement. Good, placid, comfortable Donna Berta, of passions so few, and of prejudices so many, with five daughters to bring up in the way she had gone!

In her teaching she did not disguise from these girls that they were a dead loss to the business. Husbands would have to be purchased for them out of such funds as their father could spare. When that ran short, into the convent with the rest! His money was much engaged; the cloth-trade was not what it had been for decent merchants—God knew why He had suffered the Frati to enter into trade! Caterina, who was turned fifteen, would be settled, of course: she was a broad-hipped, broad-faced, simple child, but knew her markets. Fifty gold florins might buy her a good man. Then there was Orsola. Orsola was handsomer there was no denying; Orsola was the beauty of the bunch—a fine, freely made, small-headed, blue-eyed girl; a little pert, a little too red in the mouth—"she hath a kissing mouth," says Donna Berta, "and that is no way to get husbands. A man can have kisses from his *buon' amica;* he wants housewifery from the likes of my girls. But I shall do what I can for Orsola when Caterina is off my hands. For the other three"—here she lifted her hands before her friend Monna Ginevra and dropped them to her sides—"Tears of Madonna! How can you hope for good peddling with three such gauds in your pack? Must I hawk them in the Mercato, or have a booth at the Impruneta for the fair? No, no. They must wear the drab gowns. I always told my master how it would be. Six boys right off, if you please! What are you to make of that? His luck must change—and so I told him. Good Easter to all of us! He's learned his lesson now."

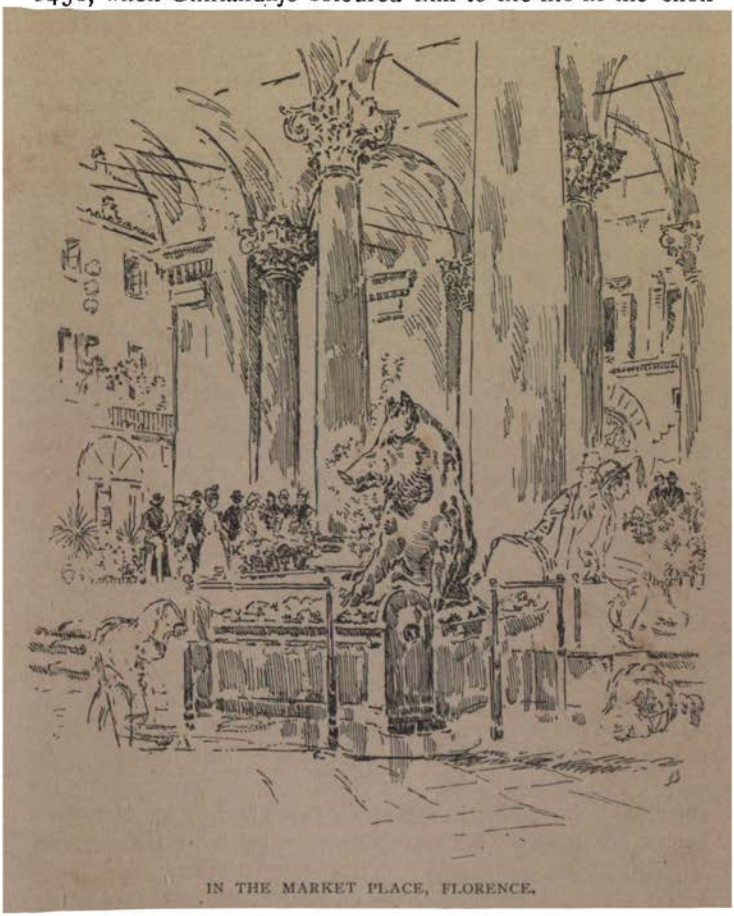
Her one grief she has borne with stoic philosophy. Tears and wailing are no indication of anguish in the Donna Bertas

of this practical world. These are the due of the dead, as much their due as masses or a watched cold night in the Guardamorto. No, her real sorrow is always with her, buried deep in household cares together with her real affection and great store of Christian kindness. She hides it indeed, as her man hides his—but they share it, it is a bond uniting this old-world pair. Romualdo, their first-born, their hope and pride, has broken away, shocked all traditions, violated all the unwritten laws of family. God knows where he may be now—robbing and reiving with Uguccione della Faggiuola, the wild Aretine; dicing in Milan, lying with bad women in the brothels of Bologna, or (it may well be) hiding for his life, a gaunt, peering scarecrow, hunted and starving, in the stony hills of Romagna. It is a story so terrible, a disgrace so severe that Donna Berta and Ser Martino never speak his name. They go as near as they can. If Ser Martino mentions Uguccione, the dread captain, Donna Berta is all ears. If it is Visconti of Milan who is blocking all the roads from the north, she will bring the talk round to the mule-train overdue, and Ser Martino will satisfy her. In these times of everlasting war not a week passes but prisoners are brought in by one of the gates, chains round their necks, dry blood and dry mud upon their faces, their rags dropping about them, and are pushed forward at the pike's point to their shame in the Piazza Signoria. There they have to kneel in turn and kiss the tail of the Marzocco at the root. You may be sure Ser Martino scans every trapped face of them. And Donna Berta knows by a glance at his stolid eyes whether she may breathe till to-morrow.

Time softens all; and it is many years now since Romualdo went off with the French horsemen and never came back. But the heart knows its own terror, and when war is rife the fear comes back. Happily one's other sons are a stay and comfort. Bertuccio is with his father in the shop, a grave, dark-chinned young man. Corradino is with the Peruzzi in London, and one hears of him once a year when the convoy comes in from Genoa. Bonventuro is in minor orders—one could never keep him from the priests; Serafino serves the altar at the Carmelite church; and Arcagnolo is a baby, as stiff as a carrot in his swaddling bands.

As for Ser Martino himself, do you desire to see his patient,

wise, far-seeing blue eyes, his hanging chaps, his creased hands, which he is so fond of hiding in the sleeves of his gown? You may see him still, or as he was in 1350; or again in 1450, when Ghirlandajo coloured him to the life in the choir



IN THE MARKET PLACE, FLORENCE.

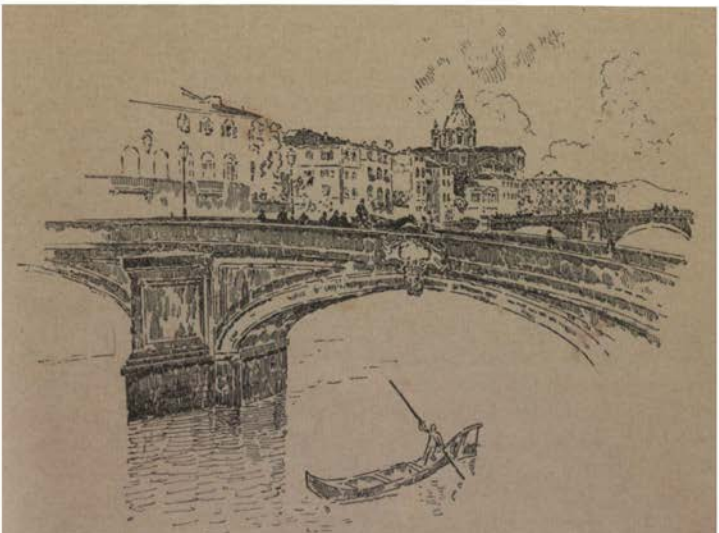
of Santa Maria. Brave old Ser Martino, red-gowned, far-sighted, patient, and as rigid as a rock. He is hard to be found in Florence o' these days—though he is still there—but his works endure. He built the Duomo, and Santa Croce for

the Frati; above all, he built Orsammichele, the church with a granary on the top, and had it made as fair as a church could be, in honour of a miraculous Virgin—grumbling all the time. When they asked him, should there not be a picture for the altar of Saint Anne—a *sacra conversazione?* "Chè, chè!" cried he testily; "don't talk to me of sacred conversations. Look at the price of wool!" But he gave way—he always did when the glory of that church was involved; if in the faint hope that Madonna would bring home Romualdo, or if to indulge Donna Berta's hope, are you going to blame him?

Not that he was a religious man, but he regarded religious decorum as an asset. He had a scoffing way with him, which no one found amiss. One day he went with his wife to that miracle of the Ascension. It was done in the Piazza Santa Croce, under a great tent-roof of blue, stuck with tinsel stars. Upon a tribune surrounded by woolly clouds sat God Almighty with little frizzed seraphim all about Him. On one side of the throne was Madonna, on the other Santa Chiara and San Francesco. The Spirito Santo, a real pigeon, was tied by the leg to the back of the throne, for fear it should take fright and fly away. Gesù had to be swung up on cords to this glorious place, and up he went. But there was some hitch—or the ropes had swelled with the late rains. He went up, indeed, but most slowly. "Chè! Chè," says Ser Martino to his wife, "let us hope the Signore went up faster than that, otherwise He is not there yet." Everybody heard him and laughed.

You would not say that such a man was a warrior, and yet he would fight for an idea or a trifle—as you might call it. There was the war with Pisa—that is a good example—the war for the Pandects; for it was nothing else. They are of the seventh century at latest,—but how did Ser Martino know this? Hopeless to study the Roman law without them; but what did Ser Martino know, or what care had he of the Roman law? No matter; he knew these things. He said in open assembly, "I am for atrocious war. Burn Pisa level with the ground, but save the Pandects." And when with great pomp they were escorted into Florence, exposed in the Duomo, offered upon the altar, and a guard set night and day about the old yellow sheets, Ser Martino went down the Calimala slapping his purse, "and," said he, "this day we have harvested a thousandfold of our blood and gold." Strange old shrewd

trader! You may say that is the last thing to call him, but you are wrong. He could calculate nicelier than we, that's all. For he knew the money equivalent of renown, beauty, dignity, proper pride, antiquity, and the like—shadowy things



THE BRIDGES, FLORENCE.

to which we assign no face value. But Ser Martino could and did.[1]

[1] Here is a good note which shows how the more lettered descendants of Ser Martino passed their days in the Quattrocento :—" Now I am ready to satisfy that curiosity of yours which makes you demand how I disport myself in this my villa of Lecore, how I make through the days of summer, and what are my literary delights. I rise betimes and, in my long bed-gown, stroll the gardens, whence having delighted in the fresh morning air, I withdraw to my study, turn over some poet or another, work at the precepts of Quintilian, or read (not without stupefaction) the orations of Cicero. I revel in the Epistles of Pliny, which are my delight, compose now and then an epigram, but more pleasurably elegiacs. After dinner I sleep for a while, and my father who is with me here, given over as he is to the amenities of letters, corrects, adds to, readjusts my compositions, where they may be faulty; and after my nap chess claims me or back-gammon [*Tavola reale*, is, I think, backgammon]. Attached to the villa we have a vineyard of good size, full of fruit, through the midst of which

runs a brook of the freshest water. Here are a multitude of fishes, great and small; here the hedges are of densest shade; the nightingales day and night complain, singing yet of their ancient hurts. Here, too, I read some good author; and next, with my lute on my knee, I sing some improvised verse or another, and sometimes a more studied music. After sunset I go to *pallone* [a magnificent game]. So I will spend my summer unless the plague in town be stayed; nor shall I till my fields, being so well occupied with the furrows of my mind. You see that I have no Sassetti library of treasures, nor any Medicean; but I have a little shelf of well-written books which is more to me than the greatest storehouse in the world. Farewell."

Is not that a pretty picture? This man's father, mind you, would be a Ser Martino; and a Ser Martino himself would this man grow to be. The Florentine, wiser than our Englishman, was the better actuary; for he could estimate the value of the Humanities as certainly not less, and probably a good deal higher than that of the Mundanities.

CHAPTER IX

THE MUGELLO—FIESOLE TO FAENZA—FORLÌ TO FLORENCE

THE Mugello is more than a watershed for Lamone and Sieve, Santerno and Bisenzio; in the old days Tuscany marched with Romagna along its edge, and in days yet more remote, it was the famous lurking-place of the Ubertini and Uberti, land-pirates all, of which two clans, Florence broke the spirit of one, and the other broke Arezzo's. To cross and recross it you must twice surmount the "Gran' giogo," which poor Buonconte had cause to remember in his grave. You will travel good roads, breathe superlative air, see a pleasant people, and gain great horizons. If these are not reasons enough to invite the reader, they were reasons enough for me. On the 21st of May, being the vigil of Pentecost, I drove from Florence to Fiesole, meaning to be over the Casaglia Pass before I was two days older.

Quidity of the region.

Cities, as we know, *habent sua fata.* Neither peace, nor the straw-plaiting industry, nor the electric tramway, nor universal conscription has made Fiesole more humane. The piazza was all

a scurry of litter, and chickens, and country omnibuses; the boys pursued me with stones and savage yells; the fierce-eyed girls glowered at me from under the pents of their towzled hair; matrons, secure from all curiosity, continued to smack their children's posteriors whether I drove out with two horses or two-and-twenty. And the aspect of the town! Could any little place be so close to a great one and borrow so little from it? How harsh a tower! What a chill upon the windy streets! Good limewash is in all; and yet in Fiesole it takes a cold tone, where in Florence and Pistoja it seems to be incandescent—as if the sun, having soaked it for centuries, had saturated it, until his light was rayed forth like heat from hot iron. Withal, a town superbly placed: fine as it is from across the valley, it is perhaps finer from behind. Beyond it, in a cypress wood, the road forks, and, taking the left to go to Borgo San Lorenzo, you will find that it winds round the outside face of a steep hill, and gives you a new Fiesole, gleaming white now between its two rocks and their citadels, and the Arno valley beyond it, sheeted in mist, looking like a sea at dawn.

Crude Fiesole.

Much up-and-down work ensues over a bad road. You pass Poggiolo with a weir and a mill. Monte Senario, a respectable mountain, is upon your left, with rocks and light oak scrub half-way up his height; behind him is Monte Morello, a greater than he. Hereabouts a tributary of the Sieve has birth; one asks its name. "Qui si chiama il fosso," was the answer I got. "It calls itself the ditch here-

Borgo San Lorenzo.

abouts." This is what Dante called the Arno—a *sventurata fossa*, but I think Poggiolo's stream was named in affection. You lurch and roll onwards over an accursed road—which is drained by the simple plan of having dykes cut across it—until you touch the good metal of the valley, and see within a rampart of rocky hills the Sieve racing south, and Borgo San Lorenzo packed about it—walled, bridged, and gated, with one fine red tower high above the houses. This is just the snug, enclosed valley which the painters loved for their mysteries. Here the Three Holy Kings adored, Saint Jerome held converse with his lion, or Saint Austin, in an airy chamber, wrote of the City of God, attended by a partridge. It is the place in every particular. Here are the light green plateaus, here the ribbony river with thin trees about it, each with its tuft of feathers; there, far off, is the bell-tower; and there from the city gate issues a train of mules which might very well carry the offerings of Gaspar, Melchior, and Balthasar.

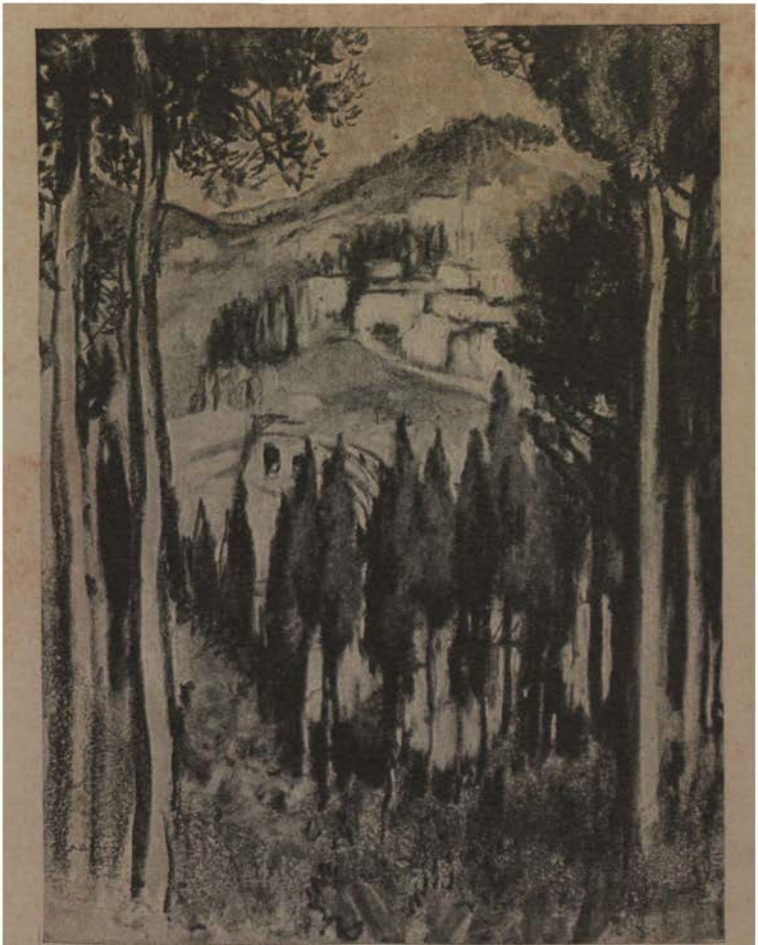
It is a crowded little market town full of evidence of a wild ancestry. Many a smithy has embedded in its walls the stump of some lord's tower; as for the Pretorio, it is a fortress, covered with the shields of Podestàs—Florentine to a man. The concentric rings of Degli Albizzi are there, Ruccellai, Puccini, Di Betto; and then comes, to tell the end of the tale, Cosm. Med. Mag. Dux Etruriæ. The belfry is machicolated, as if it had been intended for the last refuge of the citizens. Also, it is of strange construction, having being commenced as a dodecagon, but finished otherwise. It seems

that they built the hexagon, and then, patience or bricks failing, closed it off with one straight line. It is therefore a heptagon, and it is absolutely impossible of access. I was never so baffled by a church tower but once, and that was when I saw Sant' Egidio's from the Piazza at Milan, and behold it was very good. A dozen times I prowled about that place, but could never reach the tower. I found out afterwards that it had been built into the post office. Here I was in the same quandary, save that I was able to fall back upon the church itself, which is very accessible, but suffers from the common Tuscan vice (which afflicts the Duomo of Florence)—the vice, I mean, of disproportion. It is a world too wide for its height, and does not appear to have even that which it has. Otherwise it is perfectly uninteresting, yet does not fail of beggars at its doors with long petitions to your charity, nor of veiled women who pray in its shady corners all the forenoon.

Bare ruined choirs.

A scorching white lane, past the school (where I heard children chanting their lessons to the *brindisi* in *Lucrezia Borgia*), takes the voyager to a ruined cloister and church of *frati*. I should rather have said that it will take him thither if he have my sympathy for a dead sanctuary. It has always seemed to me much more touching than a dead man. For our brother's corpse will show traces of the grime in which now and again every one of us will wallow; but there is no wasted feature of a church's but marks where some Magdalen's pot of ointment was poured. With his own body a man will use familiarity, as when he soaks it in drink;

indignity compunges him not—the thing is his own. But no shameful handling may come near



FIESOLE.

a church; a man may not enter it with covered head—it is the house of God. What he puts into

it is for splendour and honour. You will always find there the best he has had to give. And to see that abandoned to the owl, the bat, and the wood-louse—discarded like a broken toy—is to be moved; at least it moves me. The case is at its worst when, as here, the original building was flimsy to death, thin and poor—no doubt the best its contrivers could attain unto, but deplorable always, and in death most pitiful. This is not a tragic ruin at all—as the spectacle is of murdered Glastonbury; it is as it would be to see a butterfly crushed on the road-side. The roofless church, made of rubble and plaster, is choked with nettles, which indeed, with the ramping ivy above, actually hold together what they desecrate, and preserve it for more lasting dishonour. You can trace the apse, the pillars of the high altar are there, the raised floor of the sanctuary where the daily miracle used to be done before bowed heads and (in the case of women) beating hearts. Now it is full of hay. Once there were frescoes over all; untidy heaps by the walls show now where the plaster has been raked together as it fell. Looked at in the large, I suspect that all great Italy is in the way with this poor place.

The hills on each side of the Casaglia Pass are entirely sterile: although the mountain tops are crowned with crosses it is most certain they bear nothing else. Bald and red brown, curve after curve of shadeless road has to be climbed; and the only interest the traveller can have is to observe the stratification. The Apennines of the Mugello are built up of slabs of rock so thin that they seem artificial, as if made of those fine Roman bricks one finds in

The Pass, Marradi.

old walls in the Campagna. Between the strata is a reddish-clay, not nourishing by all the evidence, for hardly anything grows. The river trickles languidly over slabbed rocks, much as Hermitage Water does in naked Liddesdale. At the summit you reach an altitude of 3200 feet and a great mountain prospect. The descent is rapid, through two brown villages, Cantino and Palazzuolo, and along the course of the Lamone, which will take you to Faenza and the Adriatic. Near Palazzuolo I saw a picture by Salvator Rosa: a high rock and a pine above the eddying river—boys and big-headed sheep crowded upon it—waist-deep in the water, naked shepherds dipping the animals. These were pitched bodily down and soused and soused again. They swam easily, both sheep and lambs, hounded on to further exertions by the yelling boys; but the scene was uncommonly like the Inferno.

> Non altrimenti i cuochi a' lor vassalli
> Fanno attuffare in mezzo la caldaja
> La carne cogli uncin', perche non galli.

Just so the demons on the rock goaded the demons in the water, and the sheep were soused. I saw Cagnazzo at it, and Libicocco, and tusked Ciriatto, Graffiacane and rabid Rubicant—all the devilish pack. And so to Marradi.

Marradi—with a short penultimate—is a little paved town, built of clay-coloured stone, with remains of fine old houses in many a street. The Albergo La Pace was one, where I ate at noon. The forecourt had been turned into a coach-house, the gallery had gone; but every doorway was deeply carved, the fireplaces were enormous, all

moulded; and in a recess in the kitchen was a Madonna in *gesso*, who had once been coloured in the Ferrarese fashion. First sign that I was near Romagna—my landlady. A swarthy, deep-breasted, heavy woman, very handsome, and very like a cow, she was the type of all the goddesses you see painted in the cities of the Po; but, as a fact, Marradi is in Tuscany, though Brisighella, some twelve miles on, is not. It is a place strong by nature. Guido Novello had it for the Ghibellines of Romagna in the thirteenth century, and after him and his the Manfredi of Faenza; but in 1440 the Florentines were in possession, and the Snake of Milan sent Piccinnino to try the entry into Tuscany that way.

His intention had been to take the pass of San Benedetto, which is on the road from Forlì; but the Florentine had a good man posted there, Niccolò da Pisa, with whom the dwarf had tried a fall before—to his detriment. He gave up that plan, therefore, in favour of the Casaglia (whence I have just brought you), and the more readily seeing that Bartolommeo Orlandini had the charge of it, down here at Marradi, upon whom and his post he reasoned thus, if we may trust Machiavelli. Said he to himself, "Marradi is a castle at the foot of the mountains which divide Tuscany from Romagna, but it looks towards Romagna and is at the foot of the Val di Lamone. And although it has no walls, the river, the hills, and the people of it make it a stronghold; for its men are armigerous and loyal, the river, eating into the earth, has such high banks that to enter the valley that way would be out of the question, should but one foot-bridge be manned against us:

and as for the mountains, the bluffs are so steep that their posts would be unassailable. Never-

VILLA GELSOMINO, FIESOLE.

theless the cowardice of Messer Bartolommeo has made those brave men cowards, and his weakness

those positions weak." And the truth is that no sooner did this Bartolommeo hear rumours of an enemy on the march than, leaving everything to take care of itself, he fled with all his people, and never drew a breath till he was safely in Borgo San Lorenzo. But though a better man was at hand to save Florence — Baldaccio d' Anghiori—to drive Piccinnino into the hills and win back Marradi, it is history that Cosimo P. P. made Orlandini gonfalonier, less than a year after he had shown himself most vile. *Cosa vuole? È la politica!* as a wise man of Siena said once, when a *fantino* was killed running the Palio.

We leave Marradi for the shore, with the salt gale of the Adriatic blowing in our faces. The frontier towers increase—infallible sign that we are in the march of two countries. Many of them watch the Val di Lamone from hills which are coloured like *Bizarre* tulips—striped grey and yellow and black. Torrential rains which comb them yearly, equatorial suns which bake them after, burnt grass and black junipers, produce this wild effect. But the hills run down very fast as the Lamone buries itself deep in marl. Almost in the open country, at last you see on a cliff to the east a fierce little place, with a castle on a hill, and a chapel perched on a needle of rock—just as Saint Michel d' Aiguille at Le Puy; and here is Brisighella which was once held by the Lady of Forlì and Imola, the fair virago Catherine. It has just occurred to me that Brighella, the typical clown of the Comedy of Masks, may have got his name from this place, which, with its cypresses, round towers, terraces, arcades, and round-arched churches is as little like

Brisighella, the Plain.

a Tuscan town as well may be. I remember a great old pale brick church, in shape a Latin cross, with an octagonal lantern or domicule atop, very august, but marred by a chocolate plaster façade. I remember that the canons were singing the vespers of Pentecost through their noses, and how they maddened the fine young organist they had. How he crashed in the stops and laboured at the pedal as he tried to make them go! Poor old yawning souls, they singularly lacked enthusiasm. The hour for the Descent of Tongues was past; nothing but endless sleep could comfort them. When the office was done the young organist banged down the front of his instrument, snatched at his hat, and raced out of church. I never saw a man in such a hurry. As for the old canons they went on without him—and even made a better job of it. There was less discord. The church is white-washed inside.

After Faenza, the Via Emilia and Forlì, of which, as not proper to this narrative, I omit all account, you accost the hills again at Terra del Sole on your return journey. It is one of many outposts of the Lady's of Forlì—a battlemented, close-gated place, dark as twilight within its narrow streets, and, being itself a fortress, without any *rocca* above it. Two miles beyond is Castrocaro, with a very strong *fortezza* on the cliff; six miles more and you reach Dovadola, a third embattled town, larger and more ornate than the others, with two bridges, a castle, and many churches to its credit. These and the many more upon the ridges of the hills the gallant, yellow-haired Lady of Forlì—who

To Rocca San Casciano.

looked like a Madonna and was a Semiramis—must needs see fall from her one after another, as she bit her nails upon her tower, looking for Sforza's and seeing nothing but Cæsar Borgia's host. A great-hearted woman she was in an age of great women. She might have been another Catherine, indeed, in Russia, another Elizabeth in England, a stronger (though no less desirous) Mary of Scotland. As it was, she had many lands but could not hold them, many husbands but could get no worthy children, until Giovanni de' Medici took her in the end and begat Giovanni delle Bande Nere, who begat Cosimo Primo, a man in all respects worthy of his grand parentage; in whom Catherine lived again.

Rocca San Casciano, a town of moderate ascension, is geographically in Romagna, but politically in Tuscany. Oddly enough it was one of the first communes to be acquired by the Florentines, and certainly the first, if not also the last, to be acquired by the peaceful channels of a notary. This is how they got it. A certain Count Francesco di Paoluccio da Calboli, being lord of it and the whole country side, dying in 1382, made the Republic his universal heir by last will and testament duly proved and administered. Florence stepped into his shoes, and never stepped out again. Such is its uneventful history. It does not materially differ from such towns as we have seen in the valley of the Lamone. It is bigger than Borgo San Lorenzo, closely built about the Montone, which makes a circular sweep just here, has two bridges and a ruined fortress in the hill side. Hemmed in as it is by the mountains, and packed with people, I

found it abominably hot. Its inn—I think the *Rosa*—is hospitable, but dirty; its landlord a patriarch in appearance and in fact. It is to be known of him that he has a family of twelve children, all alive, of whom seven are virgin daughters at home, intent upon the service of the house, all pretty, with hair like goddesses and the persons of nymphs; and the other five sons, all but one out in the world. Their names in order are as follows: Minotti, Domenico, Luisa, Telemaco, Teresa, Lucia, Aldina, Annina, Bruno, Socrate—who is very properly at school—Gina, Ines. The name of *la mamma* is Margherita, and of *il babbo*—Napoleone! If that is not as it should be, then the world is awry. The Napoleon of the bride-chamber is he, and a fine fellow, every inch a man. It was Lucia who supplied me with these facts; for she, Aldina, Gina and Ines waited at table. Annina was being courted by a lieutenant of Artillery and devoted herself to his comfort while he dined. Teresa was chamber-maid, and Luisa in the kitchen. *La Mamma*, as she merited, sat about knitting stockings. I saw Gina do an unusual service to her goldfish. She took them out of their bowl by the tail, washed them with soap and water, dried them, and put them back. She said it was good for them; but I doubt it—and so, profoundly, I think did they. The military flocked to the house at dinner time, and absorbed as many of the young ladies of it as they could. I am not at all surprised: they were charming.

Portico, a steeply-built town, using every peak and table of rock on either side to make its defences sure, has a gateway with a loggia above

it, finely arcaded and adorned in the midst with a great plaque of faience. The tower of its citadel is square and intact—and that is all I know about it, save that it is set like a jewel in a beautifully coloured case. For the hills round about it are of deep red marl; in terraces are set the bright green vines; and the river, running strongly here, is like translucent verdigris. No jade is of so splendid a green.

From Portico to the Pass.

After this you must climb in good earnest. You go through San Benedetto in Alpi—a village which Dante knew—it is all on a severe grade, and a forlorn little place enough—tortured out of all comfortable hue or semblance by the great winds, the rain-storms, snow-storms, and hail-storms of these high levels. Yet San Benedetto breeds poets—of whom I know one alive at this hour, a girl not more than eighteen years old. This child, taken from shepherding on the steep crags to be *serva* to some friends of mine, English people, was by them in due course removed to London. Here, being profoundly moved by what she saw and heard, she kept a diary, which her mistress was allowed to see. I too was allowed. There were some touching things in it—simple, artless, homely things, of course, the fancies of a fanciful child who has become articulate. It was extraordinary reading, too, not so much for what she had observed as for the force of her comparisons. San Benedetto and London! But the road claims me, and the Muraglione Pass—a road superbly engineered and admirably maintained, rising by sharp turns and long curves to a height of 907 *metri*, and protected from the wind at the top by a prodigious

wall (whence its name of Muraglione—the big wall). A stone upon this commemorates the virtues of its maker and the road's, that Grand Duke Leopold II. who, the reader may remember, slept in my bed at Fivizzano in the Garfagnana. I hope he sleeps peacefully now, for he laboured with piety while he lived, and is remembered with gratitude by all who love Tuscany.

The Pass to the Arno, San Godenzo, Dicomano.

From the plateau of the summit you will have the whole panorama of the Apennines, practically all, from Gubbio to Carrara. You have Falterona, pregnant with rivers, almost in the sun's eye at noon; behind him Pratomagno with a cloud upon his head; to the east the "gran' giogo," a magnificently rocky edge; far into the west are Abetone, Le Tre Potenze, Monte Cimone (finest of them all), the Garfagnana, the way of Modena. Much snow still lay on Abetone when I was there; a streak or two upon Falterona, which, *con rispetto parlando*, looks no bigger than Ettrick Pen. Yet from one flank of him flows the Tiber, and Arno from another. Far below one's feet lies San Godenzo, the only home of men to be seen. To that steep little town, which is all on a slide of rock, and has a Byzantine church, came Dante as an exile with others of his faction to make a bond with Ugolino di Felicione Ubaldini—lord of the land—defensive and offensive, against the Neri. It was, indeed, in this very church, Byzantine in appearance, with a bare brick façade and a brick tower, that the banished Cerchi faction met, and here they signed their bond. From thence, as I suppose,

the greatest of the Florentines took the road by which I have brought you, and went into Romagna.

Dicomano, with arcaded streets and a broad piazza, conducts the Sieve to the bed of the Montone; thence by a valley of extraordinary fruitfulness the wedded pair hasten on to the Arno. They reach it at Pontassieve, as the reader knows.

CHAPTER X

CONCERNING THE THEORY THAT THE WORLD IS A GARDEN

THE Renaissance in Italy, so called, whether it was a miracle or a process, is a thing which cannot be denied, especially in Tuscany, and more especially in this state of Florence. In itself a formula, it can be reduced to any other kind of formula the reader may prefer. Somebody has called it the Discovery of Man; somebody else, the Return to Antiquity; somebody with more fancy than sense, the Return to Nature, which was surely the last thing it was. Personally, I prefer to call it the result of accepting the theory, that this world is a garden; and it seems better to treat of the growth, development, and maturing of this notion in a semi-fabulous form.

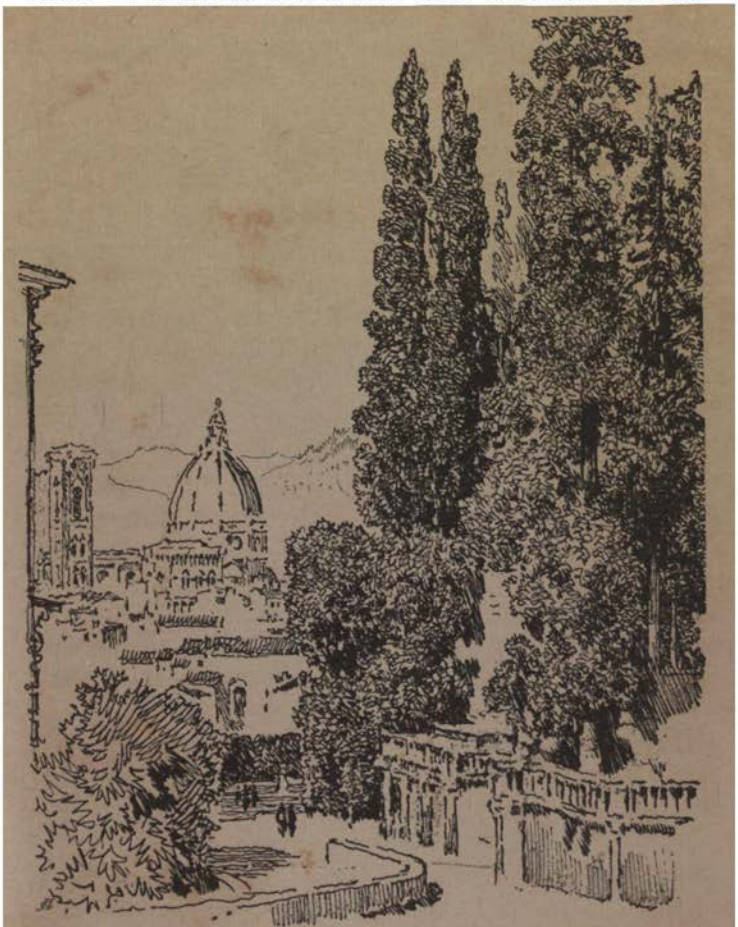
The Renaissance —what?

And yet, in a sense, there is much to be said for that particular formula which reduces the whole affair to a return to the manners and expressions of ancient Greece and ancient Rome. Ancient Greece, no doubt, was what the Italians of the *Quattrocento* aimed at—and it suits us, sentimentalists as we are (to whom the unknown

only is magnificent), to believe that ancient Greece is what they achieved. But the fact is that those Italians knew less about the Greeks than we do, and could only get at them through Roman means—which is, or seems, if seen at the right moment, uncommonly near. A ready test is afforded by a well-chosen lodging and an early awaking. Lean out of your window at the dawn of some April day, see the buildings in the shadowless calm, as white as agate—how spacious, how disposed, how serene they stand. Not like the Gothic of Germany or France, of grey and crumbling stone; not spearing up to heaven in pinnacles and finials, in spires and long shafts, not clumped together so that height may seem higher, nor narrowed, nor shortened that length or width may preponderate. These corniced palaces or pedimented churches know nothing and ask nothing better than the Earth; and their edges are as clean as the day they were quarried up at Carrara. They express a lowly, but a dignified, an exact perfection of their own kind. They will not aid your hysterics or ecstasies; but they will soothe and strengthen you; perhaps they will cajole you into thinking that Man is a more majestic being than you have any ground for supposing, and this world a more abiding city. Well, this is the classic feeling—certainly the feeling of old Rome—which the Tuscans have caught.

The sun comes up, the gold strikes fire upon the brazen cross, upon the yellowed marble, upon the hot tiles of dome and loggia. The statues upon the cornice show burning white, bitten into an air of radiant blue. Not a blue sky such as we may

have, but an air circumambient and dyed with blue. Pediment and frieze and corniced statues



IN THE BOBOLI GARDEN, FLORENCE.

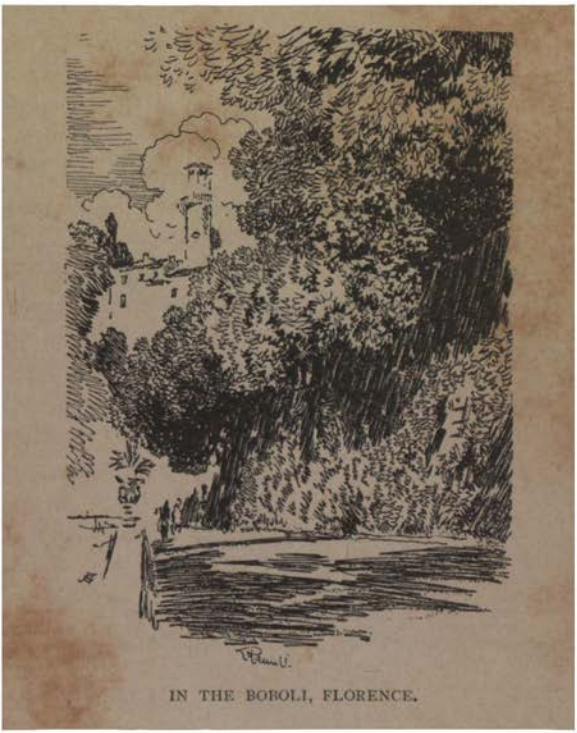
bathe in this blue, and through it you see them raying their white fire. It is very difficult to believe that a people who live in such an air and

have dipped such things in it, have not felt a breath from the Acropolis, or have not sensed the violet crown. And perhaps they have; but that does not express the whole of their Renaissance. Let me pursue my fable.

The garden lost.

God Almighty, as we all know, planted the world first as a garden, declared Himself, with every reason, to be Lord of it, and set man therein to be gardener. Gardener, then, man was, to the satisfaction of himself and his fellow-creatures, until things fell out as they did, not at all according to the benevolent design and intention of God. From the time when He degraded Adam from his office and destroyed the garden which He had made, to that at which the world was for a second time discovered by man to be such, is (according to the computation of Archbishop Ussher and others) five thousand two hundred and ninety-four years eight months and thirteen days—a period of many occurrences with which we need concern ourselves but slightly. The point for present consideration is, How came it about that certain Italians and their disciples and adherents, after so long an interval, made such an abrupt discovery as that the world was precisely what God had declined to continue it, and—more surprising still—that man was now lord of the garden, and God Almighty the gardener? The person to whom the enunciation of these two propositions is generally attributed was one Giovanni Boccaccio, a clergyman—but mistakenly, I think, in the case of the first of them. For it was a poet, Francesco Bernardone of Assisi, who

declared, living and dying, that the world was a garden. A proof of this is that, after his death, certain little flowers of his were collected, dried and pressed, and a *Hortus siccus* of them presented to a grateful world by his followers, under the



IN THE BOBOLI, FLORENCE.

general title of *Fioretti di San Francesco.* Here and there these are still cherished. Before his time the world was supposed covered in, to keep the air out; it was, in fact, considered to be a Foundling Hospital, with a crêche attached, where the Virgin Mary was wet-nurse, and our Saviour dry-nurse. The Father of all was

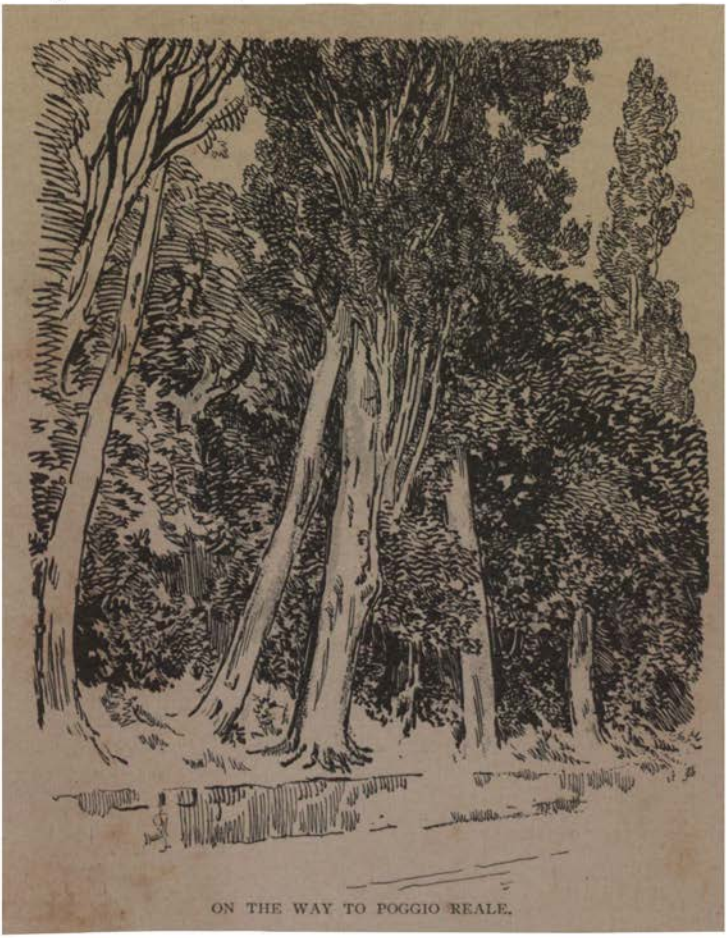
seldom there. He was much engaged in warfare with an obdurate and resourceful enemy; campaign had succeeded campaign with varying fortunes ever since the time of closing the original garden. The Foundling and crêche had been instituted by Saint Paul; and the Pope of Rome for the time being was visitor and deputy-warden.

The great system of rewards and punishments which obtained in this institution, as the world was considered to be, worked for the most part remarkably well. It was, indeed, difficult for the children to go wrong. There were so many governors and governesses, tutors and preceptors, and the system of confession of faults so absolute. Moreover, the punishment of disobedient, careless, dirty or idle children was at all times exemplary and severe. Either they were deprived of their supper until they had promised amendment, or (if incorrigible) condemned to a Black Hole in perpetuity; or (if time pressed) they were turned summarily out of the crêche and into the desert passages and empty courts of the Institution, whence (it may be feared) they drifted into the butteries, kitchens, larders, or even into parts of the house where promiscuity and depraved company completed the ruin which their first sin had begun. If this unhappily proved to be the case, they were usually handed over to the enemy on an exchange of prisoners, or they were put to picket or sentry duty, and frequently perished, as might have been expected.

Rediscovered.

Such having been the common theory of the polity and economy of this planet from the times of Saint Paul to the thirteenth century after him, it may be imagined how

great was the astonishment of Pope Innocent the Third, deputy-warden (in his turn) of the Foundling and crêche, when he understood Francesco



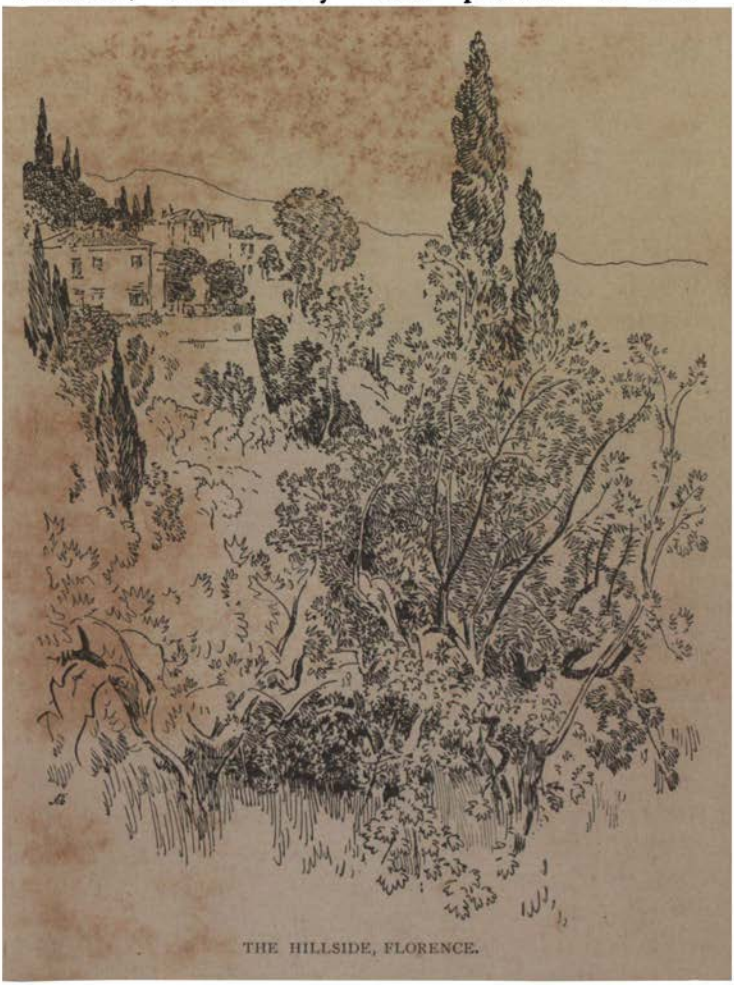
ON THE WAY TO POGGIO REALE.

Bernardone to declare that the world was nothing of the sort, and that consequently that same Pope Innocent was not at all what he pretended to

be, but rather was, if anything, a kind of head gardener, or president of the central parterre to which all the others, which were or should be in the garden, would naturally conform. Here, you see, the rediscovery is announced unequivocally. Bernardone declared precisely that the world had no covering at all except heaven, and could not possibly need any better, since God loved everything which He had made. He went on, with unfaltering logic, to proclaim that the sun was his brother, the water his sister, and that God, being indubitably Father of him, was therefore their Father. When it was objected that the sun and the water, as immortal natures, were not visited by death (which came into the world through man's first sin), whereas man was, Bernardone replied by saying, But death also is our sister. He went on to preach broadcast over the world that it was still what it had always been, a garden —a place formed for happiness, a place of extraordinary beauty and delight; and he crowned all by saying that man was neither owner nor gardener, but actually one of the first flowers in it. Here, I think, we may put our finger upon the fruiting bud in the rod of his argument whence Giovanni Boccaccio caused a huge branch to be reared, a branch which, in a short course of time, entirely out-topped and overshadowed the main stem of the thesis. It is worth while seeing how this came about.

Mankind was at first enchanted to learn that it partook of the beautiful nature of flowers. Men laughed, sang, ran about naked, embraced their brothers and sisters, enjoyed diseases, wounds, famines, torments, the pains of death.

They formed themselves into innumerable societies, which they were pleased to call



THE HILLSIDE, FLORENCE.

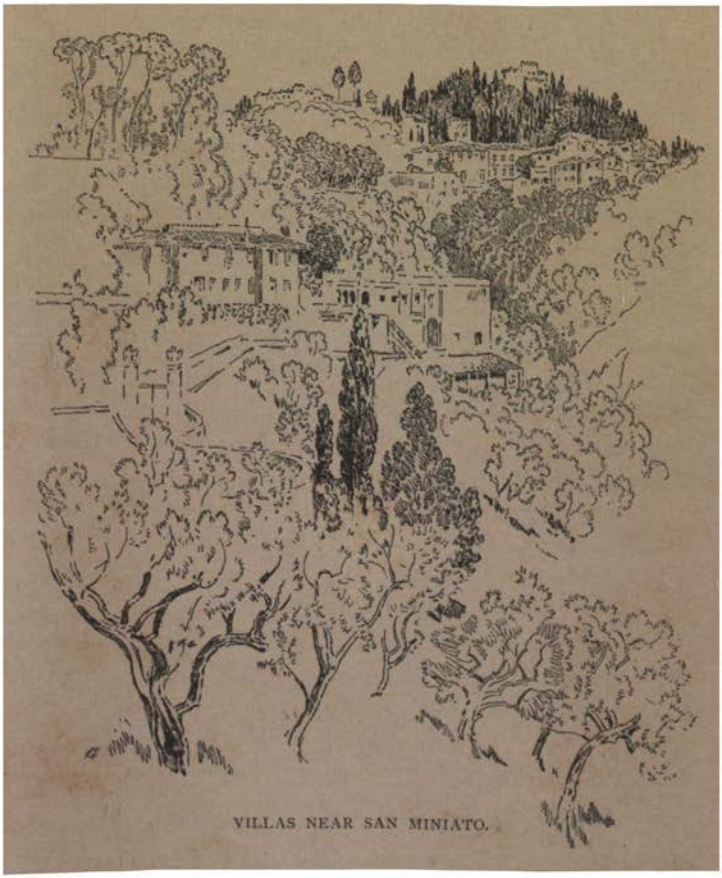
parterres, and to pretend made upon the pattern of the central parterre—over which presided, as I told you, Pope Innocent the Third, or some

successor of his. Colleges and convents of barefoot friars, nunneries, confraternities, guilds, chantries, companies of Flagellants, Cathari, Paterini, Fratres Gaudentes, and half a hundred more, sprang up all over the world, undeterred by pains or penalties of any sort. The old punishments lost their effect, since men believed that God loved them; and some, indeed, went so far as to say that if all creatures formed by Him were our brothers, then Judas Iscariot, Pontius Pilate, King Pharaoh, King Nebuchadnezzar, and the devil could be of no more remote kindred. The service of the central parterre—that is, the Catholic Church—which had once been all in all, was now largely neglected in favour of that of the Friars Minor, Friars Preacher, and Austin Friars. These churches were, as you may say, small parterres in the garden; smaller still were the oratories; but all were very small, because, according to Bernardone, God (as Lord of the garden) was always in it, and much more likely to be among His wild flowers—the wind and water, mountains and hills, trees and grasses—than in close-covered little chapels built by men's hands. And this state of things, rife enough at Bernardone's death, became tenfold more rife after it. He was canonised as St. Francis of Assisi within the year, and, as his memory increased, there seemed no bounds to the adoration of his disciples.

The Theorists.

But there were two parties upon the death of St. Francis—for so we shall now call him—whose tenets diverged into broad, independent paths of opinion. Both agreed that the world was a garden of delight;

the difference did not lie in any proposition so fundamental. The first of these, whom we will call the Literalists, maintained that mankind could only properly be called a flower in a



VILLAS NEAR SAN MINIATO.

garden when men displayed themselves in works and words suitable to the most perfect of God's creatures. Sermons were very truly flowers of mankind, philosophies, rules, counsels of perfec-

tion, hymns and lauds, spiritual exercises of all sorts. These the Literalists propagated, to continue our figure, by mixing the pollen of the old and new stocks. "Our sermons, then," said they, "are some of the chiefest ornaments of the parterres and borders; our precepts and examples are in the same category. Now, as these flowers of ours, unlike those of our master, St. Francis (which were indeed *wild flowers*, or, in a manner of speaking, *weeds*), are half-hardy annuals, biennials, or (boasting apart) perennials, there is no doubt but that large, walled hot-houses, which we may call the great churches, and hot-beds, or convents, will bring them forward more readily and earlier, and preserve them from the cold winds of spring, which, blowing over the garden, would shrivel them up before they had attained their full perfection. This was the argument of the Literalists.

The second party—that of the Inferentialists—did not fail to observe that their brethren were reactionaries, and actually further from the precepts of St. Francis than themselves. "These sermons of yours," they said, "which you perversely cultivate to the exclusion of the wild flowers of our master's joy, would be unrecognisable by him as flowers at all. You are not to be supposed following his congregations of straw huts by housing your own communities in great brick churches, and enclosing them with high walls. Your ceremonies of fasting and minute observances, your precepts and books of resemblances and counsels of perfection, disfigure the pleasaunce which he has found for us men. You pride yourselves upon your

obedience: it is one of the letter. In spirit you are aliens."

They themselves took a different course. Because St. Francis rejoiced in his brother the sun, they sat about in it all the early mornings, and, at noon, watched its fervent beams strike the earth from cool and leafy glades. Because St. Francis loved death they thought it no harm to give such a boon to their neighbours, and rejoiced immoderately in the decease of their wives. Because St. Francis bade them eat what was set before them, they ate it and sat still for more. They called these passive pleasures of theirs flowers in the garden of the world. Much more than that, they began to beautify themselves and their buildings very curiously; for they said, "We are the loveliest of God's creations, and shall we dishonour our divine Creator by mishandling or neglecting His delicate work?" They kept themselves sleek with unguents and paints; they slept soft, clothed themselves softly, kept themselves warm in winter, went lazily in summer. As for their houses, they made them spacious, deep in the eaves, many-windowed, having courts with fountains in the midst, and treeful gardens behind. They called painters and sculptors in to make the walls and cornices pleasant to the eye and the touch; nor did they neglect their churches.

Extreme opinions.

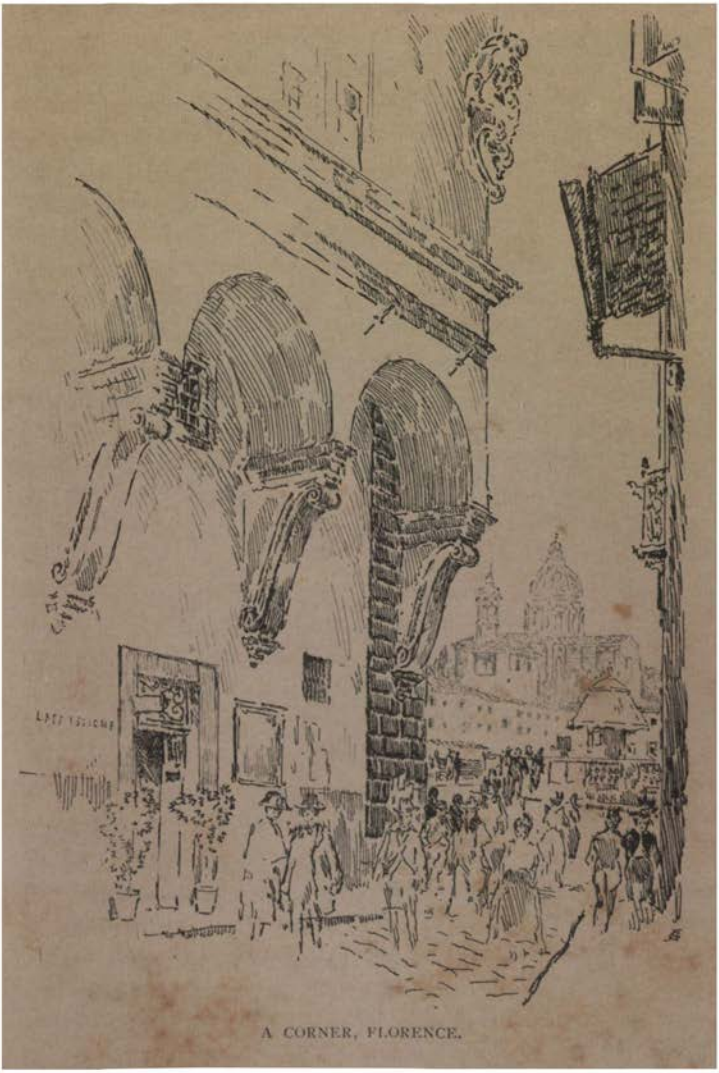
No doubt but they made these comely. Giotto was a man of theirs, and so were Nicholas of Pisa and John his apprentice—to name only masters. But this also must be laid to the Inferentialists, that whether they were

imagining pictures of heaven or hell, whether God and His family, or the devil and his, were of the parties they made, they never left out the garden scenes which they had been taught to observe, in which they had learned to take their inordinate pleasure; no, but Giotto would show you the birth of our Saviour in a rocky landscape under an olive tree; and while the Virgin Mary would be languidly observing the ablution of the Babe, an old goat in one corner would be scratching his ear with his hind-leg, or an ass on the other side of the mound would be braying his loudest in all the lustihood of his entire habit. And it fell out quite naturally that, as the painters and sculptors knew very much more of he-asses and he-goats, plough-teams and olive-yards, than they did of the Procession of the Holy Ghost, or of the Immaculate Conception, or Incarnation of the Verb, they depicted such things extremely better; and as the Inferentialists, their patrons, were in the same case, they enjoyed them extremely more. So that the goats and olive-trees, and ploughmen and he-asses encroached, and grew full-blooded in proportion as God and His angels and company retired and showed anæmic. If Giotto had begotten a family of geniuses to succeed him there is no doubt what the pictures and sculptures would have become. But though he had many children, all ugly, none of them had genius.

Therefore when the great innovator arose, with his gospel that man was lord of the garden, and God only the gardener, the people who heard him gladly were fully prepared to believe him. He was, as I have

Theory of Boccaccio.

said, a clergyman named Giovanni Boccaccio,



A CORNER, FLORENCE.

and came from Certaldo in the Val d' Elsa. He

first became notorious in Florence at the time of the great pestilence by his persistent proclamation of the beauty of the garden, and of the flowers in it, notwithstanding the fact that scores upon hundreds of men who had been walking in it in the morning, died of having done so in the evening. "No matter," said Boccaccio, "the garden appears all the more spacious to us that are left. Instead of regretting those departed weaklings, follow me, and see what a profusion of new fragrant flowers I have been finding out all over the garden. Nay, think of the dead if you will, but come, nevertheless; for just as anemones show up as red as hot blood when the snow is all about them, so is it that the pains and miseries of others enhance a thousandfold our own safety and comfort. When you are as learned as I am you will find that this truth has been declared long ago by Lucretius, a poet of old Rome."

After the like of this talk, when he boldly preached his gospel, there was hardly any one who did not forsake all and follow him. The Literalists and Inferentialists had their painted churches to themselves—which made them highly convenient places of assignation to the new *Derivalists;* indeed, Boccaccio laughed heartily at the followers of St. Francis, and those worthy persons very soon began to be as ridiculous as he said they were; for it is perfectly well known that if you give a dog a bad name you as good as hang him.

The acceptance.

By a different road Boccaccio's friend Petrarca arrived at the same conclusion. He found out the more reasonable relationships of man and God

to the garden by collecting evidence from the Greeks and Romans,—but chiefly from the latter, since, being unable to read the writing of the Greeks, he could never be sure whether he was holding their books upside down or not, and consequently was in frequent doubt as to their precise meaning. He was able, at any rate, to satisfy himself that the world had indeed been a garden long before the time of St. Francis; and he did not see how it could ever have been more nobly planned, laid out, and adorned than it had been by those celebrated peoples. He strenuously advocated a return to their system, and was of the opinion that the representations of God and the divine family which Giotto and Nicholas of Pisa, and others, had made so expressly in the image of man, could be easily adapted to the conveniency of the older religion, which, as it were, split up God into His several manifestations (male and female) and, by giving variety, induced liveliness into the religious imagination.

Argument of Petrarca.

As for the question whether man was lord or gardener it concerned him very little; but at any rate he himself acted as if he were lord, for he did what he chose and said what he thought (although, like his friend, he was in holy orders), being assisted thereto by Madame Laura de Sade, a French lady. The best proof of his supremacy over material things is that when she unfortunately died, he acted towards her as if she was still alive. This is a remarkable instance of the newly won dictatorship of man, and it was freely imitated by his successors. As to these it will be sufficient to remark that every philosopher, statesman,

painter, poet, sculptor, and builder for five hundred years to come was avowedly a disciple of Boccaccio or of his colleague Petrarca.

Multitude of inferences.

The change in ideas has only to be stated to make plain the nature of the change. From the moment that God and man have changed places, all is done. To keep to our fable for one last moment before we drop it, these were the stages of the theory that the world was a garden. St. Francis saw it a garden of Eden, where men and the beasts, birds and fishes all played together. It was next believed a Garden Enclosed, where, within a thicket of eglantine and sweet-briar, the Holy Virgin sat still all day and looked at a Baby, and young angels waved lilies over her head, partly for her glory and partly to fan her (lest she should faint). Then Petrarca and his friends saw it an earthly paradise, Boccaccio and his said loudly, "No! it is rather a paradise of earth"—which is a very different thing. Next, man being lord, and God his creature, it was considered a dozen different kinds of garden. Some said it was a garden of simples, where secret herbs grew which gave secret knowledge, to make men still more wise and powerful than they had been. Nicholas Machiavel was one of this kind, who had no *à priori* respect for anything beautiful, precious, or rare, but subjected everything to the test of man's conveniency. Lorenzo Medicis was another of this sort, though he could not help admiring the softness of fine turf and the gleam of women's white necks in shady groves. Near to him in opinion were that simpler sort of men—

like Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini of Siena, and the poet Beccadelli, and the likes of him, who would have frankly turned the world into a garden of Armida, and disported in its deliciousness so long as their senses remained quick. There were some who, in their capacity of suzerain over God, made other gods at their pleasure. Sigismund Malatesta, Lord of Rimini, was one, who, when his mistress died, made a goddess of her, just as Cæsar, in the old days, had felt it his duty to do to the man in whose seat he sat, whom he had either murdered or tried to murder. Some made the world a grove of Academe, some put up a loggia and called it a Porch. Others pretended they were Plato, but, luckily for themselves, could not reincarnate a Socrates to make them look ridiculous. In one word, given the existence of the world as a pleasure resort, God as the servant and man as the master, there was nothing which men did not feel themselves competent to do, or which they did not think open to them.

The theory refuted by Napoleon and others.

How the friar Savonarola came to say that, after all, the world was nothing of the sort, and man a degraded creature upon it urgently in need of grace; how they burned him for his heresy; how the Emperor Charles V., with a host of Spaniards, came to show the Italians that they had been playing at life, and how those wretches went on playing at it, heedless of Martin Luther, Galileo, King Henry VIII. of England, William the Silent, Queen Elizabeth, King Louis XIV. of France, the Duke of Marlborough, Monsieur de Voltaire, Monsieur Rousseau, Dr. Johnson, the Comte de Mirabeau, the French Revolution—it

boots not to say. This last convulsion drowned the garden in blood, and clogged into one glutinous mess all the Italian flowers. Then came Napoleon Buonaparte with a plough, and cut it into furrows from end to end. Most of Italy is now converted into arable. There are very few flowers left. One doubts if there are to be any more.

And this is a true parable of the Renaissance in Italy.

APPENDIX

THE ACTS OF THE RENAISSANCE

Quis prohibet ridendo dicere verum? The foregoing nonsense will be found perfectly true by whoso chooses to dig the truth out. To have put it otherwise might have taken as much space as the great work of the late Mr. Addington Symonds, who, in the embarrassment of his material, was forced to pretend that his volumes were chapters, his chapters paragraphs, and his paragraphs sentences. The development of the fine arts upon the fundamental beliefs of the Renaissance may easily be made out. Giotto, of course, was a naturalist, and so had been Niccolò Pisano. At a long interval Donatello and Della Quercia followed them, and Piero della Francesca the Great. Giovanni Pisano, Orcagna, and the Sienese were nothing of the sort. Lorenzo Monaco began the garden-enclosed or cloister-garth theory of the world; Fra Angelico and Benozzo Gozzoli told fairy tales. Enlarging a little, running wild out of doors now and then, with a keen relish for mischief and a pronounced taste for pretty girls, came Filippo Lippi with his congeners, Lorenzo di Credi, Baldovinetti, and their similars. Botticelli was a pedant with something very much like imagination. He was perhaps the most romantic Tuscan painter, who saw his dreams very vividly, and was able to give them real expression. The fairy tale element, the fanciful and the thin, grows wearisome after this, save for the great figure of

Ghirlandajo, the most typically Tuscan, the most interesting and informing, as he is the most charming, to my mind, of them all. More of him later. Roughly speaking, Giotto, Donatello, Piero della Francesca are geniuses and out of the categories. So when they came were Lionardo, the most recondite, and Michelangelo, the most devastating, of the great Tuscan artists. Lionardo was inimitable, and not imitated (in Tuscany, at least); everybody tried to do Michelangelo or Raphael, and when they copied the former they became noisy and stupid, when the latter mawkish and stupid. Genius apart, there was no good Florentine painting after Ghirlandajo. Further treatment of some of these artists will be found in the two following chapters.

CHAPTER XI

THOUGHTS IN CHURCH

The facts and the fancies.

AT my time of life I am not going to persuade you into believing that the Florentine churches are all alike beautiful, or that more than one or two of them may be equal in interest to any part of a Norman cathedral or basilica of Lombardy or Languedoc. Happy are you if you can believe it before you go to Florence—for then of a certainty so you will find it. Happy was I, long ago, when so I also found it. I know now that their character, their specious size and proportion misled me—and finely the better I am for the knowledge. But in that great day —— good heavens! there was a new and wonderful thing at every angle of a street: a church like no other in the world. Character did that for them and for me. Then there was the mystery of association to set imagination weaving tapestries. The 'Nunziata! Beatrice might very well have walked its cloisters, arm-in-arm with her girl-friends; and from that or the other pillar Dante might have watched them. There would be Guido's Vanna and Lapo's Gianna with her. One example out of

many will suffice to exhibit a quality in Florentine masonry, which—in spite of everything—endures.

SANTA CROCE.

It is not possible now to stand without awe and uplifting in any Florentine church of age. I

cannot from road or railway see the solemn brown dome, its blunter counterpart on San Lorenzo, San Miniato bleached on its height, or the tufted spear of Santa Croce,[1] without the sense that I am at the gates of the City of Wonder, an eyas traveller come from afar. Nor, like Dante's pilgrim, can I refrain from my framed words—

Ridir com' ello stea—

to those who can never see the marvels revealed unto me.

But to be sober, to be just and honourable with you who are to read this book, let me state my settled opinion, that although there is character in every Florentine church, with one exception it is not good character. Character, that personal quality, that idiosyncrasy which, no doubt, you are the richer for possessing, be it morally bad or good—for it is surely better to have a bad character than none, and, if you are a church, better to be like the Badia than the City Temple—character of a sort is essential to a work of art. One is so apt to trip off the names of churches, and bundle themselves up into categorical pigeon-holes, that one forgets that a Norman or Perpendicular building is not to be disposed of in so many words. Nor, to take *genus* rather than *species*, do you settle the matter by saying, Hum, Gothic; or, Hum, Byzantine; or, Pooh, Palladian.

Character.

Take Gothic. Gothic enough is Orsammichele, if Gothic consist in gloom, in heavy tracery, in

[1] This belfry, they tell me, is new, comparatively. I don't know. It is as old as Zocchi, in any case; and if new, as good as it can be.

wrought ogives and marble finials, in stained glass, cobwebs, and a vaulted ceiling. But it does not. Gothic architecture has a theory; it has bones, so to speak, upon which the *persona* of the church in question is plastered. But Orsammichele has none of the theory, Santa Croce little or none, Santa Maria del Fiore less than usual. Real Gothic theory is to be seen near Siena, in the ruins of San Gal-

Florentine Gothic.

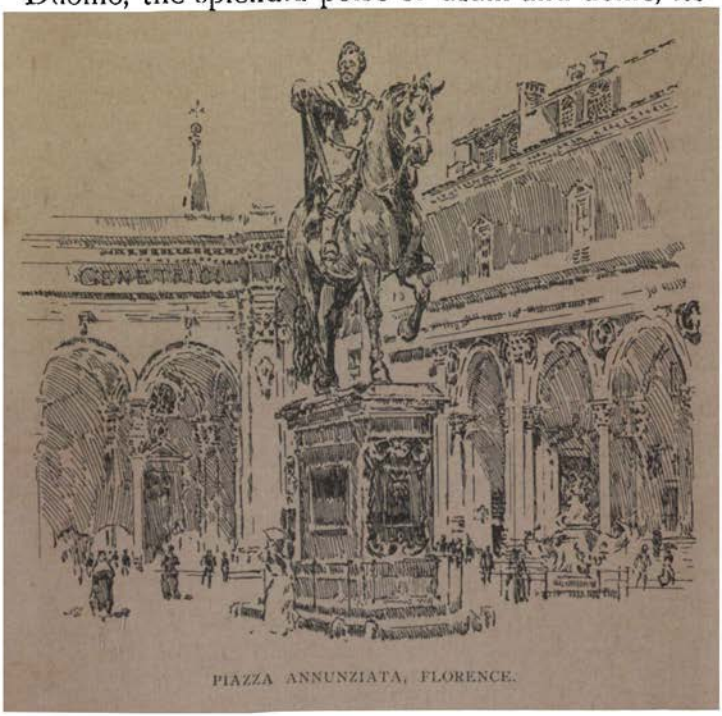
THE BADIA.

gano; and I think the cathedral at Arezzo pretty Gothic, in the French way. But I would as soon prefer the monster at Milan as Orsammichele to Salisbury, much as I love the dust-enwrapt place.[1]

[1] You may think it worth notice—as I do—that the only Gothic art which the Tuscans took, faithfully observed, and bettered, was sculpture. Regard such a Madonna as that swaying, willowy creature above the door of the Bigallo: she is quintessential Gothic. You can find a score of them at Pisa and round about. Here, certainly, they improved upon their model without departing from it, but in architecture otherwise. The fact, of course, is that sculpture was the crowning Tuscan art.

Well, if you will allow that a bad character is better than none, you will be wise to discard the categories and take profit in what you find. Venerate, pray in, San Giovanni; admire the crimson flanks of the Duomo, the splendid poise of drum and dome, its

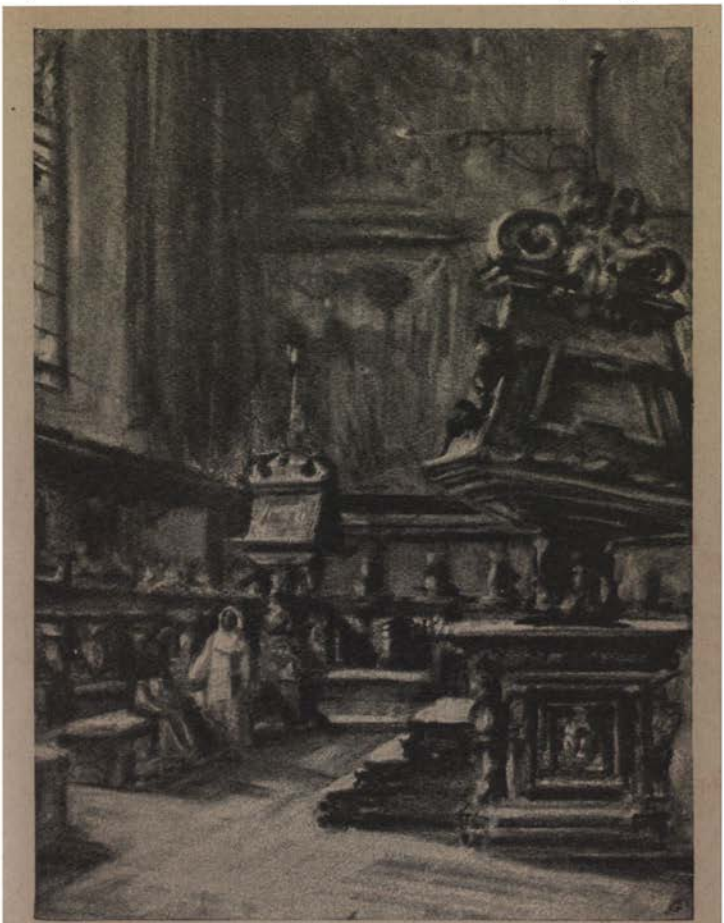
The part of the wise man.



PIAZZA ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE.

bulk, its dignity, and its air of eld; consider the belfry as a flower of the field, how it grows; look in the Badia for the flippant, delightful monument of the Conte Ugo, who saw devils in a wood, and built this church, one of seven. Think of St. Francis in Santa Croce, and all the great dead who lie dusty there; make what you can of San

Marco, which must have been Bianca Capello's parish church when she was a docile young wife



CHOIR, SANTA MARIA NOVELLA.

and household drudge in seclusion. Genuinely you will see in Santo Spirito Brunelleschi's most splendid work, but you will not set foot in the

Carmine—at least for architecture's sake—nor in San Firenze, San Giovannino (which M. de Brosses thought so fine), nor in San Gaetano, unless you desire to realise the kind of deities revered by Gian Gastone's wig. Santo Stefano and San Pier Scheraggio, if they are not venerable to you, should be; for San Pier is one of the oldest in Florence, and Santo Stefano has a black-and-white portal through which walked the Uberti clan to wait for Buondelmonte. As for San Miniato on the hill, no more words of mine can be needed. In all I have to say here I exclude it. It is not a Florentine church, and it is superb, even now.

Wandering notes.

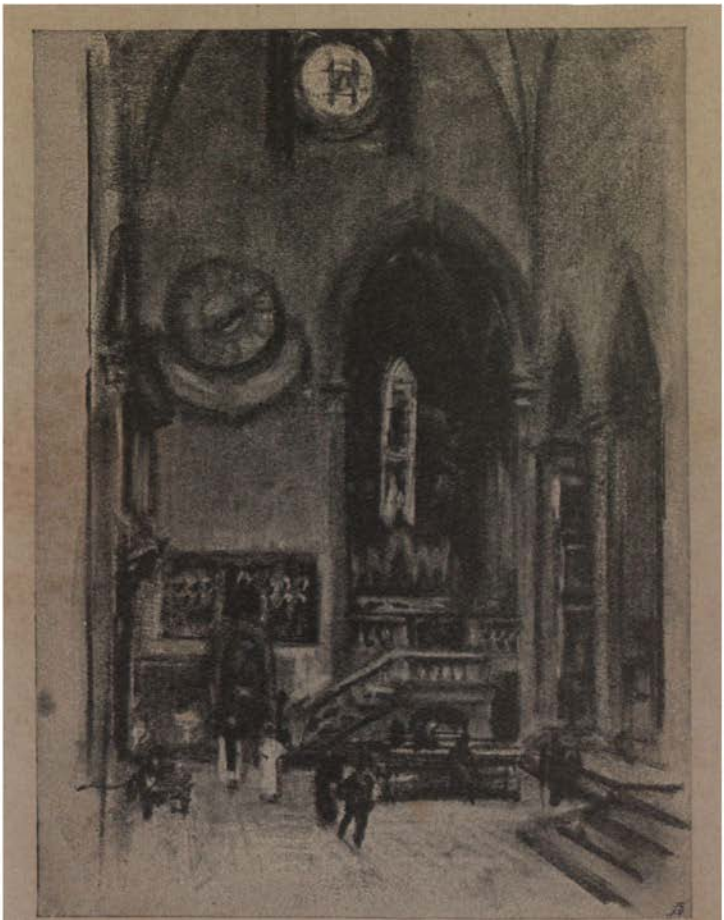
A favourite trick of my own is to stray from church to church when I am here, loitering in each, and waiting upon what thoughts may come. At such times I leave Herr Baedeker at his railway station, or in the hotel omnibus, with all his labelled wares about him.

Santa Maria Novella.

Character, for example! Where will you get a façade more bitingly personal, more bizarre, and more deeply gilded by time to a lovely hue than that of Santa Maria Novella? It must have been unspeakably hideous when Leo Battista Alberti had finished it for the Ruccellai. I remember a church at Lucca—surely San Michele—where black beasts swarm and writhe over a dead white cornice; a church of delirium, which this must have nearly resembled. But now the white plaques are like old ivory, and the black[1] is silvered with dust. Hieroglyphs, serpentine rays, quadrants, triangles, and what not,

[1] Really, green.

are shabby now and robbed of their sting. The whole mass is heaped up together at the end of



SANTA MARIA NOVELLA.

the fine amphitheatre with I know not what of perdurable grandeur. Mysterious symbols im-

pose upon without insulting you. He builded wiselier than he knew, because he never guessed how time would gloze his crudities.[1] The great Alberti! among whose virtues it was to be able to jump a horse standing.

As for the within, there is but one Italian church of the kind more naked, and that is the cathedral at Orvieto; but none at all where the effect of austerity, at once strongly pursued and easily worn, is more sure. There is less fresco, there are fewer monuments than in Santa Croce: there is much more dignity. Both are, plainly, built cheap; there is brick, and bad brick, under the whitewash. Yet Santa Maria, to my eyes, does not seem to be built of cardboard, as Santa Croce does; and if it is a case of frescoes, better a live Ghirlandajo than a brace of dead (and buried) Giottos.

Laud of Ghirlandajo.

Incomparable Ghirlandajo! Shrewdest, most humorous, inexhaustiblest of painters, what should we know of the great world of Florence without thee and thy twinkling eye? Hast thou missed not one? Where hast thou scrupled to place them, in what august company of gods and demigods? Who are these frost-bitten acquaintances of our Redeemer, these hard men in red, who stand about while He suffers baptism or changes water into wine at Cana—who are they but Ser Luca and Ser Cosimo, and other stout oneyers of the counting-house and Mercato Nuovo? Who are these goitred and overfed gossips of John Baptist but Messer Filelfo and

[1] It is proper to say that Alberti was not answerable for the astronomical portents.

Messer Poggio and their learned compeers? And who this goateed wizard but the immortal

ENTRANCE TO SACRISTY, SANTA CROCE.

Demetrius Calchondylas, who played at Plato, and would sooner sacrifice a bull to Zeus than fast

through Lent?[1] Look over the way at these ladies. Saint Anne, Saint Elizabeth, Martha and Mary, and the other Mary, do you suppose? Never in the world—but Monna Giovanna degli Albizzi, Monna Lucrezia Tornabuoni, Monna Simonetta, Diva Fragoletta, and Ippolita Bella, sweeping and shimmering from the Ruccellai garden to that of the Riccardi. Lovely, free-bosomed, high-headed, frail, tender, silly women! Of such you were; and old Ghirlandajo, alone of his generation, saw you, saw through you, pinned you like moths to his shop-walls, and made use of you as occasion served. And not of you only—you and your husbands and your lovers, your children of the right bed and children of the wrong—but those same beds of yours, and the maids and demure boys you loved to have about them; your pots of unguent, and combs, and neck-jewels, and jewels for your foreheads; your table-cloths, pipkins, napkins, pumpkins; you and all your gear, down to the dogs under the table and melons under the wall, the cunning, fine-fingered old artificer caught and caged, and washed it all into the church walls in sweet and wholesome colour; where it now is to this day, sweet and wholesome still. They say that he grew rich at his work, and aimed to have been richer. "Commission me the walls of the city to paint, and it shall be done," he is reported. I wish to heaven he had done it.

There is no truer painter, in the right sense

[1] Let it be recorded of Thomas Taylor, our eighteenth-century Platonist, that he actually did this thing. He induced a bull into his back parlour and sacrificed it to Zeus. It is said that there was no other way of getting it out again; but that is neither here nor there.

of the word, than Ghirlandajo, the most Flemish of the Florentines, who learned more than any other of them of what Van der Goes had to tell him.[1] I remember that Mr. Ruskin, and I have no doubt that Mr. Berenson, denies him ability; but really, I ask myself, what can you have from an artist which he can't give you? Character?

SANTO STEFANO, FLORENCE.

It is in every line. Knowledge? What play or circumstance of life was hidden from him? Beauty? Observe his women and choir boys. Decorative power? If you are in the Ruccellai chapel you have but to look about you, and consider whether such warmth, breadth, and depth

[1] As to this, see his "Nativity" in the Accademia, which is a copy of Hugo's hospital triptych.

of tone was attainable elsewhere in a school where such qualities were never directly aimed at.[1]

Cross the city from west to east, from what was once a slum to what is a slum still, and you will find the other Mendicants' church. Outside the gates, with the suspects, the exiles, the vicious for hire and their ruffians, those first Poor Men of God were content to be —and so it was all the world over.[2] Santa Croce, outside like a barn—an honest barn of snuff-coloured brick—inside is like a shed, with skeleton columns, and broad arches too thin to bear the great thrust, a raftered roof and a floor of red tile. Many of these austerities cause discomfort. The church is overweening wide—and here are these cardboard arches to hold it all! Such glory as it has of its original merit is to be seen in the blush of glass and fresco in the choir; and of supererogatory grace it has more than enough, seeing that it has pleased the Florentine State from a sufficiently early day to stuff it with the monuments of more or less

Santa Croce.

[1] I have said my say about the Spanish chapel already in *Earthwork out of Tuscany*. It was over-painted by the original artist, whoever he was, and has been super-painted again by some rightly nameless modern. Personally, I don't care for the wall which shows the Duomo bright pink and has a so-called portrait of Petrarch. In fact, I like it as little as I do that sugar-baker *par excellence* himself. But I do consider the tabular statement of the Virtues good decoration and good drawing, and remarkably tough theology. It illustrates in an extraordinary way that vision of the great doctors of the Church in the 10th Paradiso, whom St. Thomas describes sitting and burning apart, from Gratian to Sigier,

> Che, leggendo nel vico degli strami,
> Sillogizzò' invidiosi veri.

I will warrant he did; and the more invidious his truths the more strenuously would he have syllogized.

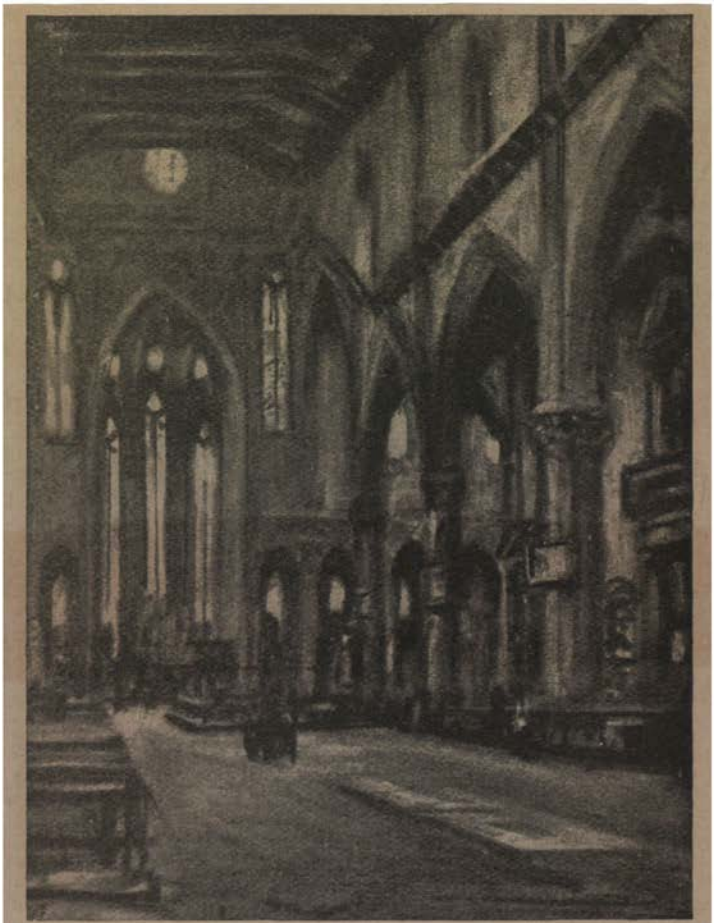
[2] All the Mendicant convents in England were built outside the city gates, and (for choice) near the gaol.

eminent persons. *Guarda e passa*, say I: the infinitely greater dead, the men who made the

SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

State and this place lie buried at your feet. Their monuments, low-lying white islands in the

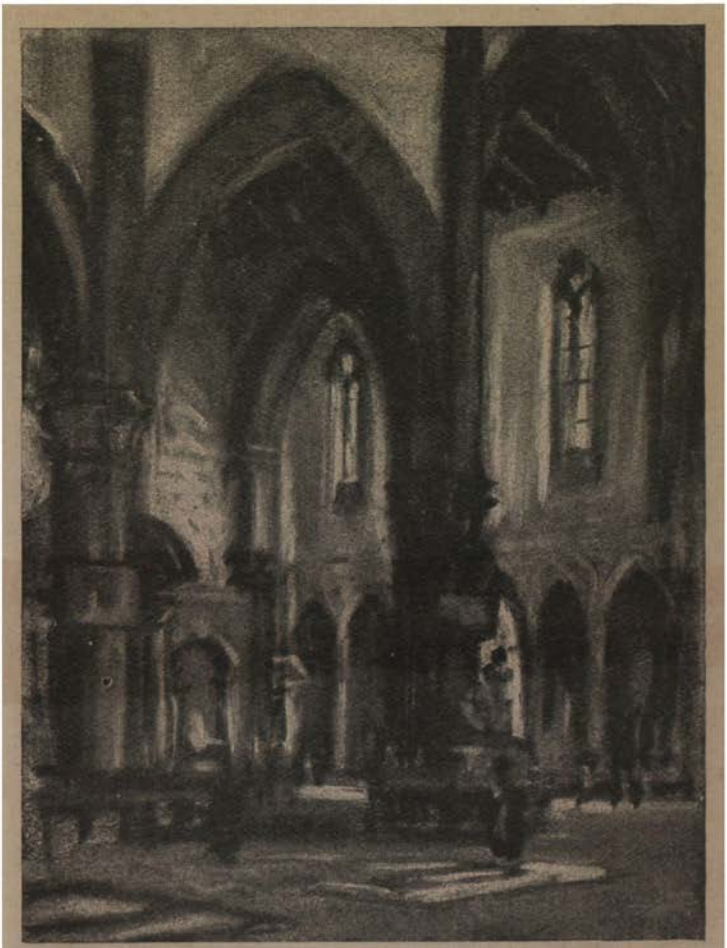
wide red floor, lack names alike and features; one can just descry here and there a long plain robe,



SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

a flat cap, a meek head sideways on the shoulder, two folded prayerful hands, and, if one takes the

pains, here and there one can avoid treading upon them—but not otherwise. Of these quiet



SANTA CROCE, FLORENCE.

worthies—contemporaries of Dante perchance, Donna Bertas and Ser Martinos, in fact—one

would like to know all there is to be told; but outside Dante, outside the Uffizii portrait of old Giovanni di Averardo, and Van Eyck's of the Arnolfini pair, you will be told there is nothing. It is not quite true; you may add Sacchetti, never too much of an artist to use his eyes and his ears. And I will tell you one more source—Florence, to wit. These rubbed, dead folk, who made the place, are alive at this day, and at work all day. Look not for them upon motors in the Cascine, nor in the boxes of the Della Pergola, not at high mass in the Annunziata; but go down the Calimala early in the morning, and see Donna Berta cheapening a fowl; look within the crazy little shop-doors and observe Ser Martino restoring a masterpiece with his thumb and a saucer of oil. The boys are doing their service, and you will never see the girls unless you mean business. One may be trundling a mop, another mending the fire with the bellows; both will be singing like larks in the sky. Blessed, thrice blessed children of Tuscany, to whom vice is as unknown as virtue, innocence a possession from the cradle to the grave, and gay curiosity as natural as to sparrows! You made Florence, and are keeping Italy alive. All this is as certain as doomsday, and has a great deal to do with Santa Croce, if you will give yourself the trouble to consider it.[1]

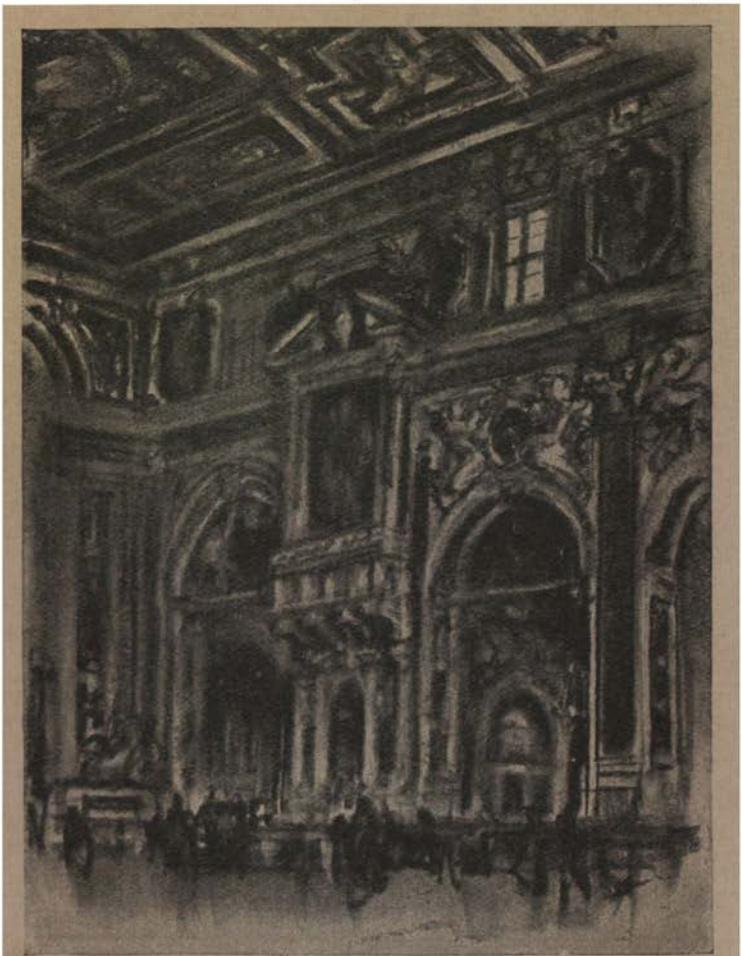
[1] See Appendix to this chapter for some further notes on Santa Croce, but let me hasten to add that since this chapter was written I have revisited the church. They have peeled off the whitewash from the rafters of the roof, and discovered the old painting and lettering; and have now begun, upon the north wall, to lay bare Spinellesque frescoes of Crucifixions, processions of *frati* and what not—good decorative stuff into which the barbarian *Seicentini* deliberately drove their abominable altars and monuments. Heartrending as it is to know what has gone

The *Osservatore Fiorentino* will tell you of the Annunziata—church of the Servi di Maria—that for many years it was the custom to hang wax models in it as thank-offerings to the Madonna. If you lost your cat and recovered it by prayer, you suspended its replica, done in wax, by a chain from the roof. Sacchetti says that he himself saw one there; and then he tells a story of a man who lived in the piazza, with a handsome wife and a butt of good red wine to his name. Nominated for Podestà of Borgo San Lorenzo, he must needs leave behind him wine and wife. To the latter, then, he commended the care of the former. "Keep that for me, wife," says he, "against I return. This upon your life and sound skin." She swore upon her hopes of salvation; away went the new Podestà and left her at home, "fare la masserizia." What occurred? At first the confessor of this pretty wife, who was a Servite, in and out all day, kept her company; but presently ceased his visits and began to show her black looks. She bore it for a time; then she goes to visit him with a fluttering heart. "Buon' dì!" "Ugh! Buon' dì." She asks him how he does. "Scurvily," says he, and complained of headache, loss of appetite, a sinking, and what not. "Oh, brother," says she, "can nothing

The Annunziata.

beyond repair, and desolate as the poor, once living things look, struggling behind the hard marble pediments, it is now possible to guess what Santa Croce once was. The church has gained beyond belief by the darkening and enrichment of the ceiling. The decoration, admirable in itself, has nearly doubled the apparent height. The pillars, too, and arches of the nave are in part pared of the grey wash. One can now see the good, squared stones and brickwork. Santa Croce can never again be what it was. It has died with the faith that made it splendid. It must be its own monument, but it may yet show for itself a decent interment.

amend this misery?" "Why," he says, "what can amend it when my drink lies cold on my



THE ANNUNZIATA, FLORENCE.

stomach? And yet wine is the life of a man. Now, if I could light upon a wine of quality, I do

believe I should soon be about again—and able to visit my friends," says he. "But there, good girl, who is there to give wine to the likes of me? Run away and do your charities. There will be *Frati Minori* at your door, not a doubt of it." "A wine there is," says this young wife, with a tear in each eye, "a wine there is no further away than the house. But my husband's hand is upon

OR SAN MICHELE.

the cask. He would sooner lose me than it, I can tell you; for I know what I am to expect if he comes back and finds it tampered with." "My sister, my sister," says the *frate*, "send me a little sup of it, *una piccola ingustaduzza*, for the love of Jesus and Mary." "If it is but a sup, brother," says she, "that you shall have"; and brings it him in her own hands. "Let me see

you drink it, brother," she asks him. There was no difficulty in that. "Eh, but that is a wine. That brings the blood to my cheeks!" If he gave her a kiss, I know not who was to stop him. Not she, for certain. The end may be guessed. "Di gustada in boccaletto, di boccaletto in gustada:" here was one's husband due home in a month from now, and the cask on the lees. "Oimè, trista, come farò?" Says the *frate*, "Think no more of it. Do but make your vow to our Annunziata, and leave everything to her." Says she, "If your Madonna vouchsafe me the grace that my husband vex me not at all about his cask, a fine cask in wax shall she have, and no less." "Leave it so," says the *frate*, "and you will see what you shall see." Well and good. Home came the husband from his podestà-ship; and whether it was that his head was in the clouds of his recent glory, or his feet in the trammels of the money-lenders, or his heart like a sponge in his pretty wife's hands—howsoever it were, he had no memory for his butt of red, which, so far as he was concerned, had never been trodden in a vat, never encasked, and never rolled into house. And now and again when his wife looked in upon the *frate* with the good news, she always had her cheek patted, and was cheered with the words, "Be you very sure, my chuck, that our Madonna never left a handsome girl in the lurch. Greater miracles than this hath she done." So then, says Sacchetti, the lady had made a cask in wax, and sent it to the Annunziata to be suspended from the roof; but he does not say, as he says of the cat, that he had seen it in its place.[1]

[1] From cats to their masters, from thieved wine to thieving wives, is

If you can admire the forecourt of the Annunziata without looking at the frescoes in it, do so; for it is very fine indeed. The marvel is that any taste or tact of any former generation of Florentines could have suffered these chrome and mauve travesties of a delightful art to be. There are many in the Carmine and cloisters of St. Mark's every whit as bad, save that they are not perhaps so pretentious as these. The soul having gone out of fresco-painting, nothing, it seems, not even cleverness, could enter in. There is no greater vulgarity than ineptitude; and one fresco here is so monumentally inept that it should stand before all time as a *capo lavoro*. The scene is a church—I know not what miracle of what Servite is doing.[1] There is a high mass, with an archbishop for celebrant. The altar, the clergy, the fulminating Host fill up the middle distance; clouds of amber incense, various devout seraphim, blue satin curtains, etc. the distance. In the foreground—in the body of the nave—is a heap, a fricassee, a salad of naked mammoths in human guise; huge pink backs sprawling, huge pink bosoms nourishing giant babies, nymphs with spilling cruses, fauns, heroes with clubs, demigods, deuce knows who or what is not in this writhing mass. "The God of Nature suffers, the earth is in travail"—some such faded allegory is intended. Let be; but it is all pink

but a step; in later times images of the grateful themselves were hung in chains from this church roof until it must have looked like the forest of suicides in *Don Quixote*. Then, upon a day, one such fell upon the head of an ambassador and broke it. The Madonna Annunziata was deprived of her unusual glories. Silver hearts must content her now—of which she has an abundance.

[1] Herr Baedeker reports the thaumaturge to be San Filippo Benizzi, the painter Del Sarto, at his worst.

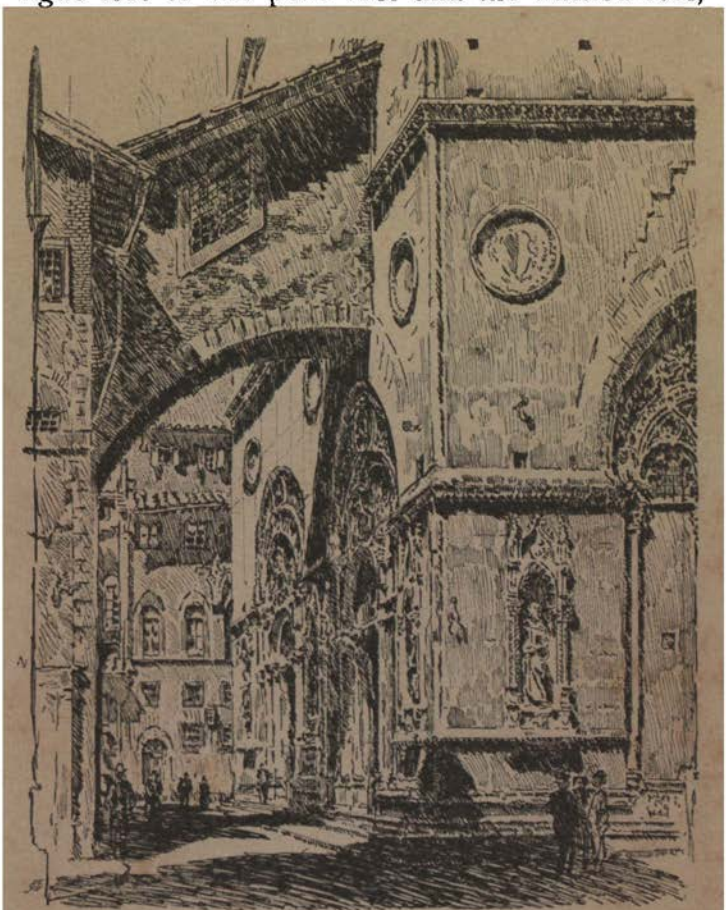
and yellow, and worse than Giulio Romano. Let that admired of Shakespeare make of the Palazzo del Tè a stable for nightmares; nobody need go there. But this is a church with a venerable name; great people have prayed here. It is old. A French knight, killed at Campaldino, is recorded by the portal;[1] under the stucco and parcel-gilt frames, under the ochres and raw blues, there are good fourteenth-century bricks, squared and baked when Corso Donati stalked about Florence, and good fifteenth-century paintings, of which one only remains. Look upon that before you go, taking the pang with you that of such, once upon a time, was all the Annunziata.

Alessio Baldovinetti tells you the truth here, as he knows it, joyful, hopeful, and most certain. Christ, says he, was born in the Val d' Arno; let no good Florentine doubt it henceforward. Here, in a square patch of Tuscan colour—the grey, the chilly blue, the olive-leaf green—you can see the mystery for yourselves, and almost mark the spot where it was wrought. Here is the river, here the dotted plain, with cypresses and white houses and church towers, fading as it does to-day into the pale mist of heat. Here are the hills of the Mugello; Fiesole should be there; behind are the mountains which take you from Pistoja to the north. In this green field the miracle was done: the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. Shepherd boys play apart, thump each other and

Alessio Baldovinetti.

[1] The image of the Sieur Guillaume de Bérard, bailli of Monsire Aymery de Narbonne, on a housed horse, and on his surcoat the *fleur de lys*, is to be seen in the cloister.

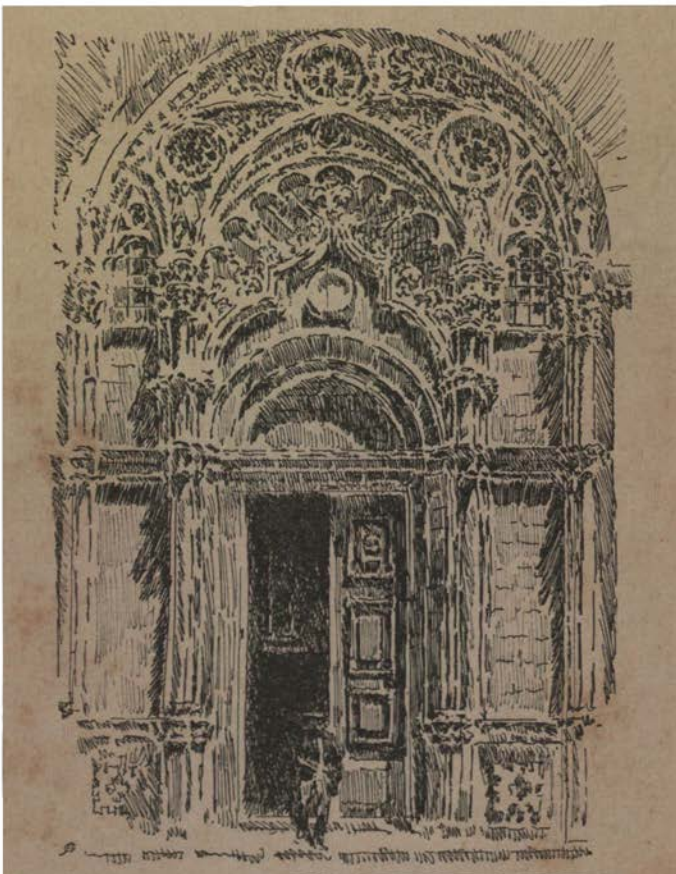
look unconscious; but their elders come with light feet to the pent roof and the wattled cote,



OR SAN MICHELE, FLORENCE

where Madonna in green and blue adores the new-born child. Hard by, upon a quince-tree, the heralding angels have alighted, like blue and

white birds perched up there, their wings still quivering with the flight. One and all have



DOORWAY OF OR SAN MICHELE.

quick Florentine faces, peaked chins, restless eyes, fine noses; they carry their clothes—for the angels are well dressed—with a flourish, but not with the bravura of the Pisan women, nor with

the lazy grace of the Sienese; rather, as if they took innocent delight in their festa finery—which is precisely what they do. For, say Baldovinetti and the rest of those philosophers, it is a great

LOGGIA DEGLI INNOCENTI.

mistake to suppose the angels, archangels, dominations, and powers are essentially different from ourselves. Messeri Petrarca and Boccaccio have taught us better. The only way we can know such persons is by making them; all the

rest is vague, if amiable surmise. Make them, therefore, as I, Baldovinetti, do, of your best, and you cannot be far out. If the world, as Baldovinetti saw it, was not a garden of delights, then Christ was born in vain.

In another corner of the cloister Andrea del Sarto has painted the Madonna as a handsome slut sitting, arm akimbo, on a sack of meal. This is to conceive of the world as a garden of *délices*—another thing altogether. To which conception, however, mankind was bound to come, having once been started down the primrose way.

Out in the fine piazza, browbeating the Della Robbia babies on the Foundling, rides the Grand Duke Ferdinand I., a soldierly boor in appearance, who had once been a cardinal, and was a good prince. As cardinal in Rome he had been "dissolute without being singular," says Captain Napier. He let in the Lorrainers by his marriage with Christina of that house, and begat Cosimo II., who let in the Hapsburg lip and frittered away the stout blood of Cosimo Primo.

The SS. Apostoli.

I shall take you into the Piazza del Limbo, a little white lane out of the Borgo SS. Apostoli, and show you a pleasant inscription :—

VIII° V die VI Aprilis, it runs, *in Resurrectione Domini Karolus Francorum Rex a Roma Revertens Ingressus Florentiam cum Magno Gaudio et Tripudio Susceptus Civium Copiam Torqueis Aureis Decoravit et in Pentecosten Fundavit Ecclesiam Sanctorum Apostolorum in Altari Inclusa é Lamina Plumbea in qua Descripta Apparet. Perfacta Fundatio et Consecratio Facta per Archiepiscopum Turpinum. Testibus Rolandi et Uliverio.*

I can't mend the latinity, but like the breadth

of embrace which sweeps in so many great names. Ogier, you see, is left out, and the sons of Aymon; Naimes of Bavier, reverend sire, should certainly have been added, for he, too, was here in Italy, when Oliver laid Ferragut low, and Roland played the sulky Achilles.

But whether or no Charlemagne ever came to Florence and flew his oriflamme, ever founded this old crumbling, hidden church, whether, indeed, he ever lived, have nothing to do with the matter. Charlemagne is more than a person; he is a tradition; he figures a whole nation. The point is that here we have a church built when the Emperor's name, when Roland's, Oliver's names were sounds to conjure with. Breath has never shaped greater ones. Rarer still, Turpin's name had magic in it. For ten persons who have heard of Charlemagne there may be five who recognise Oliver, and one who knows anything about the Archbishop. So here, in matter of association, you touch the furthest point backward in Florentine story. You are behind San Giovanni, San Miniato, and every existing Florentine church — not in fact, but in memory. For those may evoke the Countess Maud and Bellincion Berti; but this whitewashed basilica, this frowsy, unsunned piazza, take you back among the Franks. Charlemagne and the Peers in Florence! Let us stop here: no church will seem venerable after this.[1]

[1] Yet there is a pretty thing in this same SS. Apostoli—a Della Robbia *ciborium*, where comely young women-angels push back marble curtains, and cherubs, with bodies and without them, circle and hover round about.

APPENDIX

FLORENTINE TYPES IN FLORENTINE SCULPTURE—GIOTTO

I shall crave one more word upon the real Florentines, as they are to be found in this church. If you look at Rossellino's Madonna, carved over Bruni's monument, or at Desiderio's over Marsuppini's, or (finest of them all) at Mino's over Count Hugo's in the Badia, you will get the exact presentment of the best Florentine woman at her best. She is to be had also from any fresco of Ghirlandajo's, but I can't talk about Ghirlandajo for ever. And herein these men—Mino, Desiderio, Rossellino—have the advantage over Luca della Robbia, that they do give you character, in their own way, as finely and sharply as Donatello and Verrocchio did in theirs. They give you, in fact, not much beside, except a charm, a naïve, incommunicable grace which all the *Primitivi* have got. Their compositions are formal and trite, and their indication of movement or gesture is either excessive or insignificant—sometimes both at once. But the type is unmistakable. Pretty rather than handsome are these women at their best, very feminine (unlike the Sienese girls who have the manly *bravura*), pert rather than remote, graceful as children and vivacious as sparrows: it is all in Mino, Desiderio, and the others. But you will get no character in the lovely women and boys of Luca della Robbia, who, I suppose, for sheer facial perfection, have never been equalled since the *Choëphoroe* were displayed on the Parthenon frieze—those meek and burdened beauties carrying baskets on their heads. Luca no more than Pheidias portrayed person or type. He chose for the ideal, was eclectic, a composer of far-fetched harmonies. Greek through and through, he and Perugino only in all Italy; and it is good to have them there, since we cannot always be hunting after Ser Martino's daughters. There may be place and time for a little more concerning the Hellenism of Luca and Perugino; here I shall only refer the reader—for the perfection of it—to Luca's lunette of the Boys in School on the north face of the Campanile.[1]

[1] Perhaps I may recall here a little fable of my own about Perugino, the chapter in *Earthwork* called "Of Boils and the Ideal."

And if the reader were with me at this hour in Santa Croce, I would again refer him to the Campanile should he ask me to direct him to the Giottos. There are no Giottos in Santa Croce. Giottos there were; but now they lie hidden deep in folds of tempera. What you will see—certain chocolate lay-figures upon fields of pink and blue—are no more Giotto's handiwork than is the little *Meeting of Joachim and Anna* in the cloister of Sta. Maria, upon which, we may remember, Mr. Ruskin staked his own reputation and the salvation of the tourist. Giotto is to be seen darkly at Assisi, and comfortably in the Arena at Padua, and very extraordinary, very great and very shocking are those pale masterpieces. Best of all he is to be seen in the bas-reliefs of his own Campanile; and there indeed, in a material more permanent than water-paint, you may observe him for the wonder he was, a reader of earth and graver without peer. It would be hard to find a man who could read deeper into this planet. I name our William Blake, whose conceptions were on the same scale of grandeur and simplicity combined, and whose acumen was certainly equal. But he could not draw; whereas Giotto, apart from having been the most imaginative of the Tuscan draughtsmen, was one of the most expert.

Giotto.

One general note more. Stendhal, on his first visit to Florence, paid his first visit in the city to Santa Croce. His soul touched the sublime as he passed the tombs of Michael Angelo and Alfieri; but he pushed on to the choir and found a *frate* there. "Il a été bien aise de voir un français," writes the complacent man. "Je l'ai prié de me faire ouvrir la chapelle à l'angle nord-est, où sont les fresques de *Volterrano*." Frescoes of Volterrano! who knows, or cares whether they are still there? As a matter of fact they are not; but if they were, who would ask a *frate* to open them? But, says Stendhal, "Là, assis sur le marche-pied d'un prie-Dieu, la tête renversée et appuyée sur le pupitre, pour pouvoir regarder au plafond, les Sibylles du Volterrano m'ont donné peut-être le plus vif plaisir que la peinture m'ait jamais fait. J'étais dans une sorte d'extase," he says. Singular man, part of whose genius lay exactly in that kind of banality. It is a truth that his novels depend for much of their effect upon the adept use of the commonplace.

CHAPTER XII

PICTURES IN A GREAT CAGE

WHEN, upon an early page, I warned the reader that I might take a cavalier view of picture-galleries if they happened to stay my footsteps over the Tuscan roads, I knew very well that I should incur the major excommunication of Mr. Berenson and such as he. I remember an exalted passage in one of his books wherein he calls the enthusiast for Ghirlandajo "the superior Philistine," and tremble; but though I tremble I persist. I do seriously maintain that pictures, statues, great churches *being there*, are to be treated as part of the landscape—like trees or waterfalls; that they are for convenience, not cult; that they are admirable for their use, not useful for the admiration they extort from us. It is good to admire; enthusiasm is above rubies; yet it is better to admire a man in his handiwork than his handiwork in a man. Moreover—and this is corollary—there is more, and better stuff than dilettantism in every one of us. The man of affairs, the man of the world, of decent birth, education, and manners, the gentleman travelling for his recrea-

Apology of a Philistine.

tion and profit, is entitled to look at art as he pleases, and to get out of it what he can—although, as a fact, he very seldom does.[1] And he is not to be called a superior or any other kind of a Philistine for so doing; nor is he to be reproved or admonished by any such primitive means.

When, therefore, I confess that, on my visits to the Uffizii I often get no farther than the vestibule, I hope I shall be understood to mean that that affords me food for reflection enough to last me any one day

The threshold.

[1] The reason that he does not get, or look to get, what may profit him out of his artistic researches is that the artist imposes certain conventions upon him—as, *e.g.*, that you may not have a story in a picture, which, of course, is nonsense—and the critic still more. Our amateur, good easy man, pleasantly accepts them all as binding, as having the force of a law, and does his best to obey them. It is a matter for tears and laughing at once to see him. He walks mile after mile of gallery with a little book in his hand. He looks at his book before the picture—often to the exclusion of the picture. If he happen to compare picture and book, and it strike him that what the book declares to be in the picture is not in fact there at all, he is too humane or too tolerant to say so. Humane, do I say? I think he is a thing enskied and sainted when I remember how the writers of these books treat him—how Mr. Ruskin used to scold and rail at him—how laboriously Mr. Grant Allen used to reduce the whole affair to words of one syllable—with what raised eyebrows and sighs of despair he used in every case to begin with the alphabet, and before he could talk of Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* must be sure that you knew all about the Virgin Mary. And then comes Mr. Berenson to call the poor fellow a superior Philistine because he likes Ghirlandajo, and says so. I declare that one of these days there will be mutiny. I shall join the banner of revolt. So far the traveller has accepted everything at some other body's valuation; but in the deeps of him, just now, a sturdy contempt for criticism which can inflict, or art which can accept such out-and-out dogma is growing and growing. It is in a parallel with the literary convention which tells the British people that Shakespeare is the greatest dramatist ever born into the world. The truth is that he is nothing of the sort to the man who doesn't happen to think so. By thought you may not be able to add cubits to your bodily stature, but most certainly you can add parasangs to your mental. The afflicted tourist has a perfect answer to both artist and critic if he choose to use it. If I am not to judge of the thing, why is it here? More: why am I here? There is but one answer.

in Florence; to which I am able to add that it contains a masterpiece, in many respects the masterpiece of the gallery. Here, upon the top of the stair are the busts of most of the little Cæsars, to whom this place, to whom all the whitewash and stucco from the Magra to the Tiber are monuments more fitting than brass; here, in fine, you may behold most of the Grand Dukes and rulers of the people who have made Florence what it now is, and turned nearly all Tuscan towns into corniced, spacious cities, decorated with pills and crowns, and bearded, cuirassed riders upon stallions, and long Latin inscriptions. There is food for the ruminating mind here, if I know anything of the proper kind of nourishment; and to crown all there is a masterpiece.

You must go into the long corridor to find the twinkling old pedlar, Giovanni Bicci di Averardo de' Medici, behind whose little shop-front was planted the great tree of two branches; and to Botticelli's *Adoration of the Kings* for Cosimo the Elder, that father of his country who sold his child into bondage for 450 years; but here is satyr Lorenzo of the elder line, who completed what his grandfather had begun, and made his family indispensable. The bust of him here is extremely bad, having neither character of its own nor character of him in it; to get a sardonic hint of the tragedy—tragedy with a snigger, as it were—which was played in this man's soul, you must find Vasari's portrait, done from memory—as such a portrait should be done. This bust is a full-dress-parade-piece of a tyrant for whom one must needs have

The Medici.

a kindly word. He had a bent for many things, some foolish, some wicked, some swinish; but among them he had one for quiet happiness which would be amazing to read of, unless one could understand how easily a man keeps the comely and the vile in separate lockers of his soul, and can dip in either at will. Here is a letter from one of his children at Poggio to his "dearest father": "Giuliano does nothing but laugh; Lucrezia sews, sings, and reads; Maddalena goes knocking her head against the walls but does not hurt herself; Luisa can already say several little sentences; Contessina is making a great noise all over the house."[1] If a man can get these things told him in this fashion, it is certain that he loves to have them told; and if he can love to hear them he cannot be altogether bad. But then nobody is.

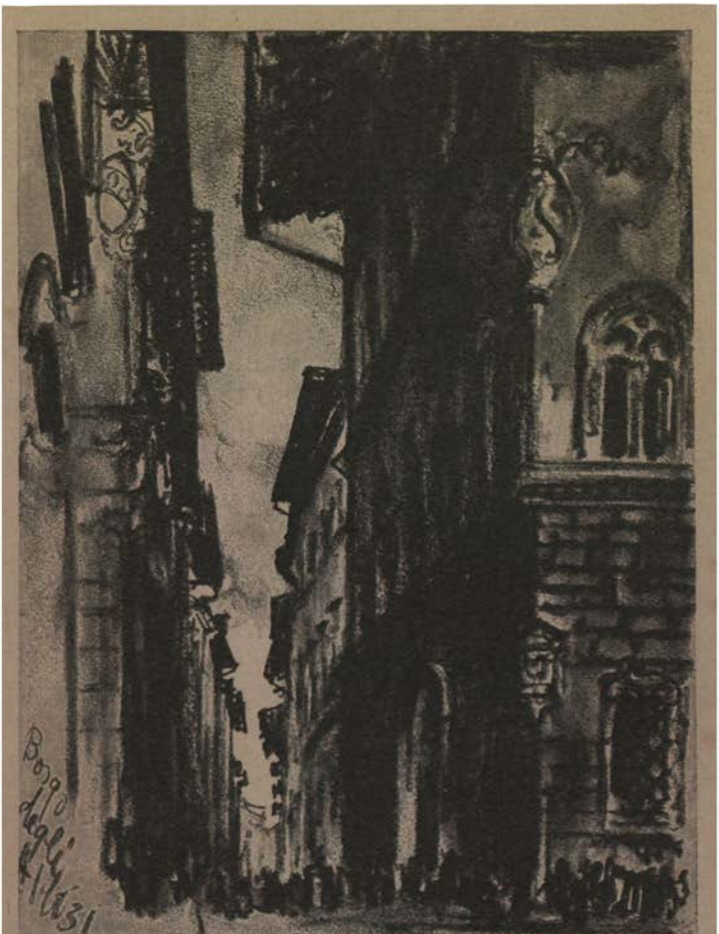
Next to him observe Cosimo Primo—a broad-backed man, and emphatically a man. A tyrant's jaw, a tyrant's little eye; but a man's brain, and will, and muscle. Of him I have said something and shall have to say more; I shall only record here that he could do everything with his State except beget heroes to govern it after him. Here, for instance, in poor shaveling Francis, is his woeful first attempt—poor shaveling Francis of the broody eye, drawn mouth, and little chin, who could only buy the ripe Bianca by the help of a Mondragone, but, having got her, clung to her through all, even to the day when she fobbed him off with a spurious child, and he discovered the cheat. He was never made for the harsh

[1] This translation is Mr. Armstrong's (*Lorenzo de' Medici*, 1896), from whose excellent book I have stolen the passage.

uses of tyranny—had, indeed, some tastes of his own which might have made him an indifferent good entomologist or numismatist. He was fond of mechanics, it seems—water-works, weeping metal trees, and the like of them. Bianca raised the devil for him in the Ruccellai garden, as the curious may read in the *Osservatore*.

And here are the rest of them—a series whose brains seem to dwindle as their lips bulge. From Cosimo II., this great porphyry man, and the Hapsburg *frau* he wived, came all the pomp and chalk, and rouge and wig-powder. Smaller and smaller grow the head-pieces, but the wigs expand—until here, in Giovanni Gastone, last of the Medici, you have nothing but a peg for a wondrous peruke; and in the bust itself a masterpiece of ironic humour not to be equalled in this or any gallery of masterpieces known to me. Bernini cannot have done it; the dates are against it; I don't know who can have done it, but he was a bold man and a trenchant. Let it be immortal, gibbeting before all time and all existence the Reign of the Wig—whose dominion, as I need not remind the reader, stretched beyond the limits of Tuscany. *Imago Dei Eminens Supra Tuscos!* So runs the inscription round the coins of this last of the Medici. Here is, then, the image of the god of Florence; and one may trace, after all, a line more bitter than from Cosimo to Gaston. One may trace the diminishing scale of the Tuscan gods—from Dante's Burning Rose to this Wig, O Heavens! Survey once more before you go this grim crew, bloated or imbecile: you will have before you in epitome the post-reformation vacuity, the post-reformation tragi-comedy;

murder and whitewash, lechery and perfume, lying, gluttony, ordure, putrescence—all smothered



BORGO DEGLI UFFIZII.

in a great wig! No more can be seen in San Lorenzo itself, where, robbed of all but blasphem-

ous epitaphs, these creatures lie adust and quiet. Michael Angelo, who foresaw them all, and lived and laboured for a kind of ghastly forerunner of theirs, has set up figures of his nightmare, gloomy Titans, sprawling, writhing, yawning demigods, too weary to live and not able to die. And if these sights satisfy not the beholder, let him walk farther afield; see Pisa, Arezzo, Cortona, Volterra, and what it has pleased these puffed grandees to make of them. Personally, I have enough sense of them here. After them, the busts of two square-headed gentlemen, who called themselves Ferdinand III. and Leopold II., respectable Lorrainers, reconcile me to church-wardenry for ever. And so into the gallery.

The gallery system.

I think that despair may well fill the heart of the traveller when he enters the great Uffizii rectangle, and sees before him the leagues of imprisoned pictures, torn all of them from their sometime homes and flowering-places, and pinned to these walls. As well study men in a troop-ship, or plants in a botanist's cabinet, as works of art in such a place! A *Birth of Venus*, which may have seemed a very mystery of sea, shore, and quiet dawn upon the wide walls of the villa, cramped into a cell exactly big enough to hold it, terrified into drab nonentity by a crimson and blue *Coronation* on one side of it and a magenta and yellow tapestry on the other; here is a sight to make Herr Baedeker weep. The huge, winged pageant of Van der Goes', once planned out for a stately altar; a *Perseus and Andromeda*, which once made joyful some bride's store of new linen—ranked here like dry moths, so many specimens

merely for the dilettante with his tape-measure and magnifying-glass! Pallid old crucifixes; predellas without their altar-pieces; aumbry-doors torn from the secret Host they sheltered; and all these tricked-out, pretty virgins with their heralding angels, these naked children squeezing goldfinches, clear-eyed boy-and-girl-saints, these *Adorations* of kings and shepherds, *Conceptions*, *Nativities*, and *Assumptions* of Virgins, choirs of heaven, mystic roses, Presentations in Temples, and Circumcisions of divine Boys—alas! what are they doing here? They belong to the Holy of Holies; they illuminate the most recessed song of the soul; they are our intensest private devotion; and here they all are, brazening it out like tavern signs. Well may the traveller say it is a pitiable thing—both that the faith to which they testify can be so dead, and the curiosity they are to satisfy be brutal enough to have killed it.[1]

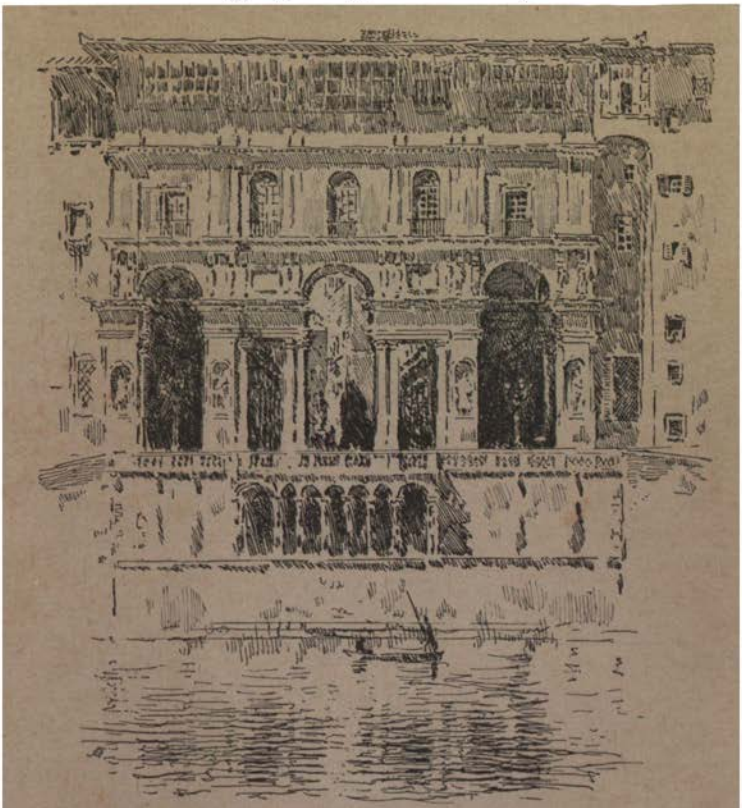
The nature of a picture.

For do but consider what this thing is which we call a picture, and its maker a masterpiece. Leave apart its ethical or emotional import, don't stay to consider a religious picture as the creative effort of a man at his best confronted by the universe at its best, as the fruit, therefore, of the Divine urging in a man; consider it solely as a delightful thing to see and to look upon. That which makes it so, and was understood to go to the making it so, is its simulation of a natural act. It must seem inevit-

[1] I need not, surely, point out that the state of feeling which such exhibitions as this evoke is more acute in Italy, the home of these poor pictures, than in England, where we have brought forth other sorts of fruit. For England, imagine Bishop Wilson's prayers or George Herbert's songs ground out upon the grammophone at the Crystal Palace. This is a perfect parallel.

able where it is—over an altar, deep in a recess, behind a grille at the windy street corner—it must seem to grow there, it must appear to be an efflorescence. And part of the urgency which produced it, believe me, is the flowering instinct in the man quickened by the dæmon of his art. Take a case. Go into some lean and raftered nave, clatter up over the tiled floor, kneel beside a kerchief-covered woman and an old man or so at an altar-rail under a glimmering lamp. The altar is shabby, the candlesticks are pinchbeck, three-quarters of the candles are of wood, the other quarter is tallow. The flowers in the paste-board vases are made of rag, the little card on which are the priest's secret prayers is black with grease and dirt; the tabernacle of the sacrament has no lock and is smeared with finger-marks. You know very well that the curate has scrambled up to it times and again with his miry boots where they will, and his sticky fingers grabbing for a hold. But there, above all this tawdry ruin, there is a square of greenish blue fainting off to saffron, and that again to ivory. There, upon this mellow field, is a thin stooping woman, with corn-coloured hair and blushing neck and face, and narrow, peering, animal's eyes, who leans her cheek to the naked atom she holds in her arms, and receives his embraces or satisfies his needs as meekly as if she were his bond slave. Her robe is pale rose, her cloak black, with gold-threaded embroidery worked along the hem; the under-sleeve is crimson, in the slashing is the whitest lawn. About her head is a filmy veil, and over that an aureole as cold and bright and thin as the sickle rim of the moon at her last

quarter. But the whole apparition is tinged golden and warm by time, and candle-smoke, and the blue fumes of censers; you know that it has been blooming quietly, steadfastly there from



THE RIVER FRONT OF THE UFFIZII.

time whereof there is no reckoning. It is a part of the strange calm and comfort of the place; it is a citadel of the faith stronger than you would believe. Take it away, the faith must surely perish; take it away, there is nothing to be made

in this ingenious world which can replace it. Priceless where it is, it is probably worthless where your States-Museum-Director will hang it. Nor is this, of necessity, a religious matter at all. The facts hold good for the Peter de Hooghe in the cool Dutch parlour, or for the Cupid kissing Psyche in a meadow of anemones and columbines in the sala of the great villa on the hill. The men who made them made them for their places. They would not thank you for the honours of a catalogue, nor Herr Baedeker for his starry wreath, in exchange for an aim missed or a pride made beggar.[1]

Coup d'Œuil.

Mr. Symonds at generous length, Mr. Berenson in a more frugal, but somewhat pragmatical manner, Messrs. Crowe and Cavalcaselle in large volumes, and Mr. Grant Allen in a primer, have indicated—and more than indicated—the general story of Florentine art; and I in my humble way have fabled its relation to the general process of Florentine life in the chapter concerning the theory that this world is a garden. Divesting the gallery, therefore, of all that it contains to illustrate these works, divesting it also of the merely pretentious,

[1] There is one other thing which, taken with this, makes gallery-visiting like a dream of havoc. It is that they fight among themselves, the distraught pictures; that, not content with abiding their own deaths, they are to kill one another. The Uffizii, then, may be considered as one vast shambles, where 2000 Madonnas and 2000 Bimbi are strangling each other. Thus stated, the position will not bear thinking of; thus stated, a great picture-gallery of devotional and votive pictures may become an offence to decency and self-respect which no honest man can afford himself. None of this touches the dilettante and his dry light of research; but I am by no means the only man who has been touched by it. In it is to be found, by him who cares to inquire, the reason why, in this book, my little say about Tuscan pictures at large has been mostly confined to those which are still growing in the corners where they were planted.

of most of the full-dress-parade pictures, which I am content to leave to connoisseurs of such wares, here is my account of what remains.

Beyond all cavil the blazing gold piece of Simone Martini and Lippo Memmi would not be of that remnant were it not for the humanity of its shrinking, beautiful Virgin Mary. This gesture, this exquisite emotion, immortalise the thing, which neither gold nor ultramarine can ever do; nor do I believe greater insight, or motion in its way more dramatic, is to be found in any picture here. There are many more gorgeous—Angelico's *Coronation*, Lorenzo Monaco's *Adoration*, with a burnished background—but none more aptly dramatic.

Simone Martini.

For the same reason—its instinct for humanity and significance—the judicious will admire in Agnolo's *Annunciation* two things which mark it out: the angel kneeling bolt upright, and the formal arrangement which turns a religious anecdote into a sacred mystery. There is nothing else to stop you on your way past saints and angels in a blare of gold and crimson—except the intensely humorous, living, and quirkish Giovanni Bicci de' Medici, to which I have referred, and shall again refer more than once—until you come to the great battle-piece of Paolo Uccello's—all darkness, spears, and horses' rumps. This is a work of great art anywhere or in any company. After all, no human being alive or dead has been able to do more, in the way of art, than reduce some great fact of nature or supernature to a comprehensive and significant formula. To do

Agnolo Gaddi.

Paolo Uccello.

that is to do artist's work; to do it grandly, with a great air, as of some god surging in you, is to play the fine artist and achieve the masterpiece. In divers ways it may be done; for where one will redact it into sonata or poem, to be rolled out in strong floods of martial sound and speed, another stamps it in gold and black and fuliginous streaks upon your wall. This Paolo Uccello has done, and this yet again; he has put music in. The golden trumpets on the left have just this effect; they speak, they herald, they chide. This, then, is a very song of war.[1]

Depreciations.

I don't myself believe in the lumpy Baldovinetti which comes near by the Uccello, and the less because of the exquisite fresco of his at the Annunziata, of which I have already discoursed. Nor can I admire so heartily as I might the three Cassone-fronts of Piero di Cosimo's, when I remember our *Cephalus and Procris* which is his. That there was a natural magic in the man is to be seen in what he has put into that dawn-tragedy down by the still lake; that there is some in this *Andromeda-Perseus* affair I will not deny; but there is not nearly so much. And, of course, what little there may have been is all evaporated in this vast corridor. A Cassone-picture is for one's bedroom, to be pored over in early wakeful hours, and read from, story upon story. For stories come into the room long before your servant.

But on the left-hand side of the door of the Gem-room is a little square picture [No. 86] by *Ignoto toscano del Quattrocento*, which with what

[1] I need hardly say that we have its fellow at home; though this at Florence, to my sense, is the finer of the two.

bad drawing and worse painting it may display, seems to me of better worth than a dozen brocaded Filippino Lippis. And for why? Because it does contain a truly observed thing and a strong effort to render it —to wit, a gesture of wanton youth, a reality, and an essential fact. In this possibly ill-contrived little masterpiece you have a secular Madonna struggling with a wilful Bambino, who stiffens himself in her arms, and recks nothing whether he fall and break his neck or no. You can see her laughing perplexity; how she holds him fast, with what wonder watches the new sally of her baby—herself not much out of babyhood yet. I don't say that all this is exactly here, but that the man has struggled to put it here; that so much of it is here that I am able to recognise it on the instant. And I say that a man, to be a painter worth talking about, must have more to show for himself than the tricks of his trade, more than a manner of laying canvases, of laying on paint, of massing, and balancing, and toning, and getting the value of this, that, and the other. If he paint the mother of God or the mother of men, if he paint the Son of man, or any poor son of woman, there must be more than formula, much more than brocade, if the result is not to prove a diagram or a dappled square, which you only hang upon the wall because there is not room to stretch it upon the floor. The instinct to seek, to observe, to express humanity is, *ex hypothesi*, in all artists, great or little; but the evidence of it in some is stifled, in nearly all concealed. And, oddly enough, the better artist a man is technically, the

An Unknown.

more he conceals that instinct which is his only proper glory. You have to be a tolerably bad craftsman to leave bare your own preoccupations, your delights, your yearnings and struggles; and this is why bad pictures are often more interesting, and always more instructive, than good ones, and why Botticelli has earned his cult. Not that Botticelli was a bad craftsman—far from it; but it's certain that he tried to express more than was possible; and that while he failed to do that, he betrayed to us all his passion. So it is here with my *Ignoto toscano*. What interested him, long before the time, was *genre*: an interior, a young mother tussling with her baby. He hasn't done it, but he has tried for it; and because he has failed you know what he wanted to do. *Non so se mi spiegho*, as they say here.

Off this great corridor there do open the many rooms devoted to the school of Florence, filled with full-dress pieces which may have served their uses upon high altars, but serve few here. Their chief interest is archæological; the dilettanti pore over them like Jews at Christie's; the brochurists make great play; and once a month a learned critic writes to a learned periodical to say that the ascription of such-and-such, hazarded in the last number by Herr X. or Monsieur de Y., is patently based upon insufficient data. To my mind, I take leave to say, this is the way to reduce pictures to the level of settees and little dishes of enamel. A settee or a snuff-box may be good art: in kind it is as passionate a business to build an *escritoire* as the Cathedral of Chartres, in kind it is as nervous a business to carve a cherry-stone as to

Scuola Toscana.

model *Ilaria del Caretto*, to paint a pipe-bowl as the *Primavera*. But are there no degrees? Are pictures only furniture, only bric-à-brac? Upon my life, I had always supposed them more. But if Herr X. and Monsieur de Y. and the Cavaliere Z. are right, then I have always been wrong.

Until I am convinced of error, however, I shall not hesitate to declare that your vast panoramic *Assumption of the Virgin* by Fra Bartolommeo, your crowded *Epiphany to Kings* by Filippino Lippi, even your *Sacred Conversations* by Botticelli and his friends, interest me but sparingly. They do not seem to me good of their kind; for if you desire meticulous detail, exquisite detail, you have but to see the great Van der Goes; and if you want bravado and colour, you will assuredly look for Paul Veronese or Peter Paul Rubens; or if you want drawing, you will be wiser to inspect the designs of those very men for those very pictures I am decrying. The Tuscan art was drawing, and the true Tuscan quality in art was "distinction,"—that something which is almost the same as "style," that personal something which identifies a gentleman, at once, or (say) a Frenchwoman; and an art so delicate and so diaphanous suffers when it is overloaded with paint—with paint, observe, not colour; and a quality so peculiar is necessarily not remarkable when all the pictures, which, singly, might display it, are herded together.[1] Wherefore, in all the

[1] If I am right about this, and if the real Tuscan Art were drawing, and the real Tuscan quality distinction, these two facts are enough to explain why it is that the Florentines were always happier with fresco than with oil or tempera, and why, to obtain the full value of a Florentine picture, you have to see it alien company. Any visitor to the Sistine Chapel or to the galleries of Milan, Venice, and Paris, will agree that these things are so.

splendours of the rooms of the *Scuola toscana*, only call attention to Lorenzo di Credi's naked *Venus*, a pretty brown girl of the country, and to the fact that she looks undressed in this overloaded company.

There are two fine portraits in the room which we may call the *Calumny* room: Pollajuolo's *Galeazzo Sforza*, an elegant, incisive, great-mannered thing, and Lorenzo di Credi's *Verrocchio*, like a little creased rogue of a cheesemonger, a good, sober, humorous piece of work. There are other good portraits, but these stop you at first glance—or they stop me. And in the Tribuna it is portraits again which hold my eyes waking, as the Psalmist says. I don't believe a better diagram was painted in the fifteenth century than Mantegna's portrait of *Elisabetta of Urbino;* nor, great as the times were for portraiture (with all Venice, with Spain, France, and the Low Countries at the work), can I remember pictures which have moved me more than Bronzino's tragic presentment of the doomed Panciatichi pair: that sad, diseased, beautiful, dying woman; that fantastic, self-informed, disastrous, red-haired, mad Marquis, with his shocking light eyes and heedless lips. What a couple! what a tragedy! Shakespeare could have done it: Lucrezia Panciatichi for Desdemona, and this sick-brained ape of folly to kill her with loathing, not a pillow. Bronzino has one other tragic portrait here, in the Sala del Baroccio, of Eleonora del Toledo in pale brocade, with hag-ridden eyes and a set, stern mouth, upon a background of electric blue, and with murder, infamy, and lewdness in the

Portraits.

Bronzino.

hair that goes through those fine-winged nostrils of hers. Not to be compared to either Holbein on one side or Rembrandt on the other, there is that about Bronzino's mathematical austerity which goads the imagination. The very coldness of the man is a sting; he seems as dispassionate as Dante.

I would commend also, if I pass by, the Sustermans gallery of portraits. A man of remarkable force and verve; a swaggering, hit-or-miss, have-at-you-there kind of a man, I find him. With the airs of a bully and the savours of a rip about him, one can hardly imagine a better painter for the work he had to do. He wrought at the grand-dukes of the Medici line,—black-avised, bloated, and high-blooded,—at them and their ladies of the right hand and the left. It is more possible, with his aid and Zocchi's and Callot's, to get at the monstrous parade and ghastly intrinsic vanity of the seventeenth century than at the truth of any other age in Florence. And that we may leave the Uffizii with a clean tongue, I will invite you to look at the brisk, airy piece of Giovanni di San Giovanni's, the *Burla del Piovano Arlotto*, full of light; all character, vivacity, and thin, clear paint; the work of a man who might have been the Hogarth of Florence, or its Longhi, but who, so far as I know, did nothing but this one picture to justify the pretence.[1]

Sustermans.

A tonic for the end.

[1] There are religious frescoes of his at San Giovanni, his native place in the Upper Val d' Arno—poor yellow and blue things of the usual kind.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WAY OF LUCCA

WHEN you are weary of the dust in town, and see all Bond Street in Vieussieux' shop; when the sacred dove has spluttered its course, and white oxen have haled into retirement the Pazzi's car; when the *bibite* sellers in the Piazza have convinced you that it is possible to make *limonata* without lemons, and not to improve it by that omission;—then you may remember that the striped tulips are to be found in the olive yards, and that up in the villa garden young men are pruning the roses on the walls. Then also you call Trombino, the jaunty proprietor of two old horses and a *milordo*—for thus he calls his carriage—and bid him make ready for the road. Brilliant as may be his acquiescence, you are bound to reflect that had you told him to set fire to Santa Croce his answer would have been the same. *Servo suo:* it has an ingratiating sound, and commits you to nothing. He disappears to make his preparations, or you are to suppose it; you don't see him for ten days. You see nothing—no horses in the stalls, no carriage under the pent. • The eve

Tuscan preparation.

or departure cometh; you meet Trombino in the lane. Hat in hand, he bears the brunt of this dialogue:—

Padrone. I have wished to assure myself that you are ready. Is all in order?

Trombino. Sissignore. All is ready.

Padrone. Ah, for example——?

Trombino. Signore, I have bells for the horses,

S. FREDIANO, FLORENCE.

and the tails of foxes against the flies. I have striped blankets of a certain gaiety to keep the dust out of the baggage. I have a new thong to my whip. All is ready.

Padrone. These things have their uses, no doubt; but I have not been able to see the carriage. I hope I may trust you for the springs.

Trombino. Signore, si. They have been painted yellow and black.

Padrone. Painted! Speak to me of the horses. We have a long stage to-morrow.

Trombino. It will be nothing. My horses have brass accoutrements. The harness is as good as new. And there are bells. Also, the tails of the foxes——

Padrone. Well! You have already referred to them. Remember, we start at seven-thirty sharp.

Trombino. Come lei crede. Riverisco.

Thus the *vetturino* of Ponte a Mensola girds his loins and complacently faces the road. With peacock-feathers dancing on two crests, with jingling brass and wrangling bells, with a whip most importunate, and eight hoofs making independent music, we took the road to Lucca and the sea before third mass was done in San Frediano.

The shabby gate of this worthy conducts you from Florence to Lucca, and with reason. For it once conducted into Florence the great Lucchese,

San Friano.

San Frediano himself. He, by all accounts, was the first Christian in Tuscany, and Lucca, whose bishop he was, the first Christian city. The first city of Light should be called Light: *Luce* was therefore the name bestowed, "now by corruption of the vulgar become Lucca." Here is a simple clue to what has long puzzled the philologists. This San Frediano, having turned the Serchio for the benefit of the Lucchesi, and set bounds to it, subdued next the Arno to suit his occasions, as you shall hear. For having an urgent desire to

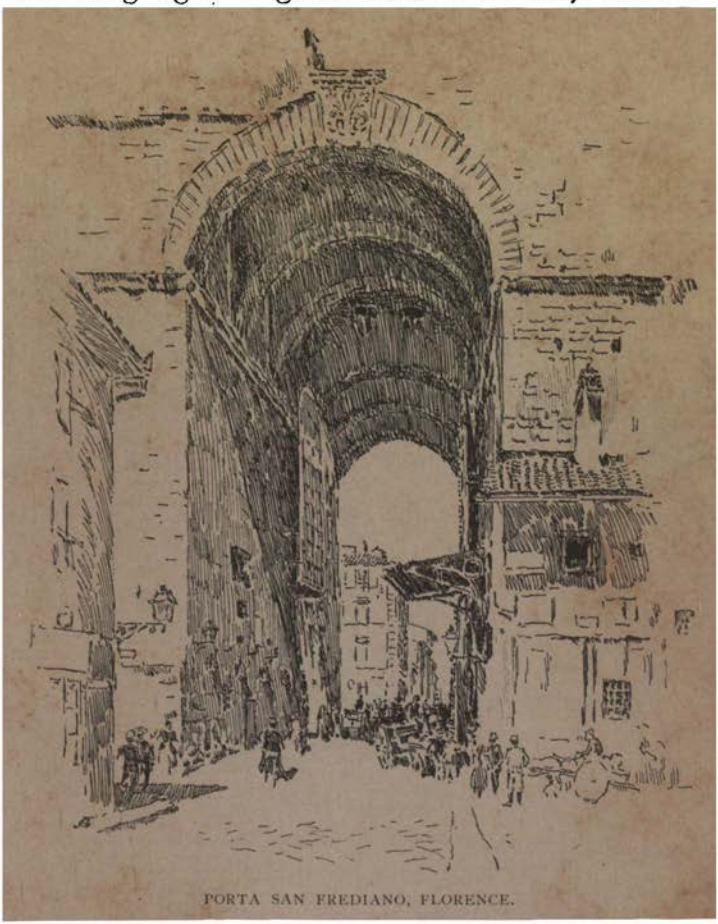
sit as a pilgrim the church and body of San Miniato on the Mount, he came to Florence, and, for reasons best known to himself, by the north road, that is, by Buggiano and Pistoja. Not daring to enter the city because of the pagans, and confronted by the river in flood, upon its heavy waters he did not hesitate to embark in a little skiff, against the will of the boatman. "By a wonder of God's grace he crossed over freely and soon, as if Arno had been little; and there, where he landed, a church of San Frediano, through devotion to him, was built by the Catholics of Florence." And I may add that church, gate, and quarter, all of his name, give more than a hint of his origin. For San Frediano —now we come at it—was an Irishman, and Irish to behold is the quarter of his children, a place of smeared aprons, slippers down at heel, touzled heads of sleeping malefactors, dirty wine-shops, unglazed casements, shrill voices, fighting, gossip, and much laughter; densely packed with the unthrifty poor, their grievances, families, and fleas. It has always had a bad name, and still has, to the polite; but it has made history, and may again. To San Frediano, for instance, belonged a certain rascal called Cheat-the-Cat (*Bugigatto*)—a plotter of sedition against their lordships the priors, a wool-carder by profession, but by election a demagogue. The taking of Cheat-the-Cat in the midst of his periods, and the screwing of him on the rack, were the beginning of the notable riots which history calls "of the Ciompi," and the occasion for the emerging of one of the heroes of Florence—Michele di Lando the wool-comber, no less. This man by his

talents, insight, and a rough sort of equity, ru[illegible] all the city for some six weeks, rather after the fashion of Abou Hassan ibn Bekr, the Sleeper Awakened of fable. And when he was done and done with, Florence was the poorer by some fine houses and the richer for his strenuous figure. For the history of the town can give you no more salient scene than that in the crowded Piazza—Michele di Lando in shirt and breeches dubbing Salvestro de' Medici a Knight of the People. San Friano, as they call it, now is no less outlaw in mind, though now it proclaim the fact by dirt, outcry, and the exercise of illicit trade. Far beyond the gate its disgustfulness extends, afflicts the road, gives a scum to the eyes, a tetter to the houses. For if the road from Florence to Lastra is the worst in Tuscany, the suburb which it serves is the worst about Florence—to say which is to say all. For your compensation you will have, what Tuscany never fails of, the dim spring landscape, air warm and mild, yet with a friendly bite; Monte Oliveto deep in ilex on the south, the blue barrier of the Pistojesi to the north, and before you a vista of grey and rose, and a lavender sky, the promising haze of fervent weather, into which you must presently go.

You cross what Browning calls the "flashing Greve," whence Buondelmonte came "and all our woes," and which I saw coloured like a kingfisher, blue and green; and then reach Castel-Pulci on a hill, a wide-winged villa of the ceremonious days, with stone cressets on the parapet, gods and goddesses upon the terrace, a stairway of two ascents, and a dead-

Castel-Pulci.

straight avenue of hornbeams leading the eye by long parallels to the doors. The Pulci lived here, but long ago; a great race, if we may believe



PORTA SAN FREDIANO, FLORENCE.

Cacciaguida and the profound Borghini. Ruined before Cosimo de' Medici's day, Florence only knew them as a family of three brothers and

a sister, all poets, all handsome, and all poor. Luigi was the youngest of them, and not only the best workman, but to my thinking the very best of all those tragico-comico-romantics, poets of embroidery, after-supper trouvères, whom the time and the taste called forth. If you love romance the *Morgante Maggiore* will wound you in a tender part; if you are devout you will not read very far. You must, in fact, be a persistent trifler to be pleased. The *Morgante* deals with that high "Matière de France," Charlemagne, Roland, Naimes of Bavière, Ogier, and Ganelon —with the matter, but not in the manner:

> Rollanz est proz e Olivers est sages,
> Ambedui unt merveillus vassalage.
> Puis que il sunt as chevals e as armes,
> Sa pur murir n'eschiverunt bataille—

thus the *Chant de Roland* in the great old epic way. But this is Luigi Pulci's way with Renaud of Montauban, that dire son of Aymon:

> Rinaldo quando e' fu nella battaglia,
> Gli parve esser in ciel tra' cherubini,
> Tra suoni e canti . . .

This was the new, gilt-edged epic, which was content to suppose a knight-at-arms in the press of spears, thinking of the cherubim, and harps of gold, and the celestial quire. I think Margutte, his guzzling giant, speaks best for Luigi:

> Rispose allor' Margutte, a dirtel tosto,
> Io non guardo più al bigio ch' a l' azzurro;
> Ma piacemi il cappon lesso e arrosto,
> E voglio qualche volta anche del burro.

Here is the philosophy of his kind. He believes no more in the black than the blue, and as much

in God as in man. But beer will serve when the wine is out, and it's an amusing world if the butter is fresh.

The abominable road takes us far from Castel-Pulci, which they say is now a mad-house; it jolts and bruises us to Lastra, of which walled and bastioned dirty town it is meet to say nothing. As little shall we say of its sister Signa, on a sharp hill. Men of Signa were unsavoury to Dante, you may remember; the town is no sweeter for the centuries. You can see it red and white through a tracery of leaves, and go to it if you choose by bridge or ferry. You will be wiser to hail it in passing as the last of Florence, and cock your nose for country smells.

Sure enough, when the valley closes in, does Tuscany resume herself, and old primeval things are discovered droning the diurnal round as they did when Virgil sang the Chant of the Plough. Here are the littered farmyards, stone pigeon-houses, and Madonnas flowering in old walls; here the ox-teams creep along—Titans caught and yoked—their heads close to the ground, their horns a cause of entanglement and grief. Here, with the same wandering, plaintive melody (insisting on the minor), *cantat frondator ad auras*, as he did in the plains watered by reedy Mincius; here are pigs in the clover and geese on the grass, beans in flower and golden-tipped vines in the bullace-trees; and here are the peasants in the field, men and boys and girls, in rags which fold about them like bronze, and with glossy brown legs which Donatello might have copied, and indeed did copy. What he got also of theirs, the dignity

Field, furrow, and down.

of these dumb creatures, their slow, reposeful eyes, measured motions, patience, akin to the great beasts, their fellow-labourers, or the great earth, mother of us all, is a thing more enviable. To be at once so graced, so toil-worn, and so still! Herein they resemble their mother; even now they are so close that their very hue is of her; at a distance they are as the clods, nearer like dusty trees, or landmarks spattered with dry mud and caught straws. I had sight of one such—a lad in a felt hat, such as the Greeks gave the young Hermes—who, with the head and limbs of a Hermes, stood at gaze in a bean-field, leaning on his tall hoe, one hand cupping his chin. If he was clad in an old cotton shirt and pair of blue cotton breeches, you hardly knew it. These things were as nothing—parts of him as he was part of the landscape. Near by was the hovel he lived in—a starved, windowless shelter from the rain. He shared it with hens, dogs, children, and goats. Why not? A chance of the Kingdom of Heaven, an eye for God in the Mass, was all that separated him from them. While the hens were conceiving eggs, and the goats storing their udders, what was he doing but after his kind? He munched his crust afield with them, rested in the heat with them again, went under the roof-thatch with them to sleep. I suppose his vocabulary contained a hundred words, all monosyllables; and theirs nearly as many. The happier he! Nowadays the Italian Government draws him in and makes a soldier of him. In stiff tunics, shouldering incredible loads, he and his brothers run about in flocks behind breathless and indignant subalterns. He is taught to read

and write, and to do other things neither so polite nor so convenient. It makes little difference. His term over, he comes back to the land, to his dumb outlook and his monosyllables. What is he to read? To whom shall he write? With whom is his commerce to be? So the earth draws him back with her other children—the hens, the goats, and dogs; and these I hold to be kindlier mates for him than narrow-eyed Bonaroba on the pavement, or bold-eyed Marietta at the window. What he thought of us I would give much to know. He was still amid-field, hand to chin, when I last saw him, and the hens were pecking grain between his legs.

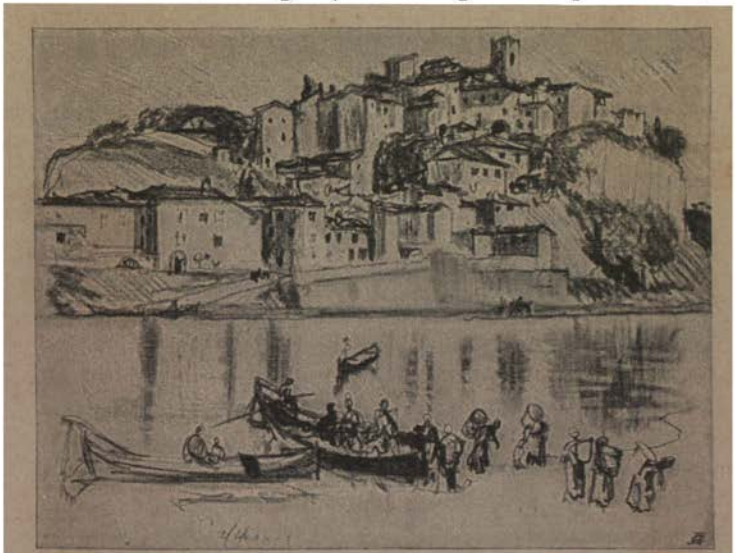
As the hour swings toward high noon, the sun in a clear sky shows this to be a valley full of surprises: quick turns of the green river, terraces with vines, rocks, abrupt hills clouded with olives. You think of Salvator Rosa, and wait to see brigands (one on a white horse) crossing a ford, or, in some rocky glade or other, soldiers playing cards on a drum-head. These enclosing hills are not high, but have character and outline. Sometimes they give you a fretty edge, like a saw's; sometimes to a longer curve cypresses make sharper teeth; sometimes you come upon a broad grey down, like those of the Winterbourns to the north of Salisbury, dotted so with the intense black of juniper that the whole looks like some huge plover's egg; and then you know where Piero della Francesca got his landscape. But all this changes after San Miniatello. The valley broadens into a great bay, the hills decline, in order, as it seems, that Montelupo and her sister may appear the more

Montelupo, Capraja.

grandiose: Montelupo and Capraja, one on each side of Arno, rock-seated, castellated, towered, with purple roofs rising in steps as the houses climb—Capraja daringly beautiful, with a pink belfry standing up like a flower stalk out of grey and green. Of Capraja they tell a good tale, which rounds off a stave of Buondelmonte's saga—a vengeance taken on the plotters of that fine young man's murder, and yet again a vengeance on the avenger.

You must know that after the death of Buondelmonte war raged in Florence for some fourteen years or more. Ranier Zingane de' Buondelmonti, a wise and magnanimous person, brother of the dead, led the Guelfs; Schiatta degli Uberti, as of course, the Ghibellines. The war burnt itself out, the land was quiet; they thought to cement the peace by a marriage. Former experience should have warned them: note what happened. Schiatta degli Uberti offered his son, Neri Piccolino, to Ranier Buondelmonti for a daughter of his; the pair were betrothed, if not married. Then, in the castle of Campi, the Berteldi, Mazzinghi, and Buondelmonti made a love feast, to which they asked their sometime enemies. Schiatta went, nothing doubting, and Oderigo Fifanti with him—the murderer, you may remember, who disliked the cold. On a signal given the Guelfs jumped up from the board and attacked the Ghibellines. Schiatta was killed outright by Ranier; Oderigo Fifanti was barbarously sliced. They cut off his nose, his upper lip, and slit his mouth to the ears. Some escaped to cry the horrid fact in Florence. Neri Uberti sent back the girl, with the message

that he would never breed from a traitor's imp; atrocious war followed, and the sun of Farinata degli Uberti arose. In the year 1249 the Guelfs were driven out of Florence after a day and a night of street fighting. Ranier Buondelmonti and his family took refuge in Capraja,—just now in front of us in a glory of sunlight and pink buds,



CAPRAJA.

—and the Ghibellines blockaded them, having a base at Fucecchio and a good hold on Montelupo here. The blockade was close, the year wore to the spring. The Emperor Frederick came into Tuscany with his army. He would not go to Florence, where he would now have been welcome, because an oracle had told him that he should die there. The odd thing is that, not at Firenze, but at Firenzuola he *did* die. Meantime

Capraja, starving, but putting on a bold face, was in treaty for peace upon honourable terms. Ranier Buondelmonti and his garrison were to march out with the honours of war: all this had been settled in council by the besieged, and was in the fair way to be agreed upon by the besiegers. Now comes in accident, *inexorabile Fatum*, the destiny of cobblers, who have ever been a grudging race. Such a cobbler there was in Capraja, one of the ancients of Florence, who had not been called to the council. The neglect preyed upon his mind, and festered, and bred corruption of his honour. He went one day to the gates and told the enemy the true state of the case within walls. Terms were shortly refused; starvation did its work; Ranier and his garrison had to surrender. In May 1249 they went to Fucecchio at the mercy of Frederick. They were all transported in chains to Apulia, some to be killed, others to be maimed. Ranier Zingane de' Buondelmonti was saved alive, but blinded by the red-hot basin. "In the Isle of Montecristo he ended his days in religion." Learn now the fate of the cobbler. Farinata and his friends guaranteed his safety, and while they held Florence all went well with the man. But the Guelfs came back and knew him again. "So the people rose up and stoned him, and the children dragged him about the streets till they were tired; and then he was thrown into the sewer." Thus Villani with Spartan brevity. But Buondelmonte's saga really ends at Monteaperto; and here is enough of high tragedy for the time —*paulo minora canamus*. It was at Montelupo that they made those pale plaques of *faience*,

lemon and blue and tender green, which you may still see set in the walls hereabouts telling their romantic tales: Madonna receiving a fluttering angel, or Assumed into heaven in a starry robe; Saint Andrew with his scissor-cross; Saint Christopher carrying the world on his shoulder. The accursed collector and his cabinet is responsible for the modern stuff (for such is made) which has to serve many a homestead in default of better. The colours have become glaring, the lemon a harsh chrome, the iris-blue nearly black; invention is gone, and with it, in large measure, the piety which asked and that which provided these pretty safeguards. But that is the way of religions as well as of their emblems. Over-emphasis is always suspicious: "the lady doth protest too much, methinks." The colours of this latter-day stuff are gross, they hurt you without your knowing why. If you are a philosopher you inquire, if a plain man you look elsewhere for your comfort. The Tuscan land, indomitably serene—the hills, the woods, and the flowing water—is all you have left to rejoice in; for the rest, memory must provide your soul with meals.

The cross-roads, Fucecchio, Ponte a Cappiano, Contado di Lucca.

After Empoli—to which I shall return—the road divides into three. One will take you among the hills to San Miniato and the south; one to Pisa over a dead level; another to Fucecchio and Lucca, and that was my road. It is a dull business for many a mile,—fat, smiling country, very green, but not without reminder of the hills. You can still see the Pistojese uplands far to the north, clouds about their dark bases, through a

rent a gleam of snow; looking behind you will mark the softer contours which hem in Elsa, and provide the resting-places for a score of towns—San Miniato, with a tall, broken tower, Certaldo, Colle, Poggibonsi, San Gimignano, and Siena herself, lady of all that land. You cross the Arno by a fine long bridge, well worth the pence they tax you, and are deep in tangled hedgerows; then, at the end of a shady road, embanked above the fields, you see a pile of building, purple and creamy white, with heavy square towers and a binding wall. That is Fucecchio, like a lord's castle, which has seen many lords rise and fall. Castruccio had it once, or thought he had. He entered in a night of storms, when the wind, ravaging the turrets, drowned the noise of his men carrying the gates; he got all but the citadel, but for want of that could not hold what he had. He fought his way out next day, on foot, he and his knights, and escaped to Lucca wounded in the face. Again he came on, and yet again; not even Altopascio could secure it to him. At the hour of his greatest glory, when he was looking into Florence from Bellosguardo, and setting his men and light women to run races round the walls, Fucecchio remained faithful.

There was a family of Della Volta who had a tower there and bred a line of appetent captains. They came very near to holding Fucecchio and all the country. Their names betray them for hardy, big-throated ruffians of the familiar sort. Corrado was one; they called him Corradaccio. Then came Guido, whom they also swelled into Guidaccio; then another Corradaccio. They fell a-quarrelling with the Simonetti; they fought at

night in the cut-throat alleys, and hanged each other by day out of the windows of the citadel. "There were plenty of dead and speared men in that country," says the historian, "and of men taken and hanged by the neck." No doubt of it. The din they made surged up and down the valley and rumbled far off into the hills. It set the Malpigli and Mangiadori fighting in San Miniato, the Ardinghelli and Salvucci in San Gimignano. But to continue would be tiresome. When every little huddle of tenements is held by a robber in a tower; and for every towered robber there is another with a grudge against him, what are you to make of the history of Tuscany? The fermenting of small beer. Let the dead Fucecchiesi alone, and *Avanti, Trombino, per Cappiano!*

Cappiano, the Contado di Lucca.

Ponte a Cappiano, where by a covered bridge you cross a swift little river—which I take to be the Guisciana, and know to hold trout —was where Castruccio drowned most of the Florentines flying from Altopascio. He not only knew that they would take that road if he beat them, but knew that he should beat them, cool-head that he was. So he laid his plans accordingly, and had an ambush at Cappiano. It is now a bright and prosperous town, amphibian, with seine-nets drying in the sun and files of ox-carts patient in the streets. There are boat-builders' yards by the water, and spades in sheaves in the shop-doors. It has a Teuton look — might be in Lincolnshire or Nassau. Just beyond it, by a white house, you face a long hill which you must by all means climb. It is the first ridge of the Cerbajese hills, a spur of the Apennines (on

whose hither slope is Altopascio) which sets two nations apart—the hard-favoured Florentines and the gentle Lucchese. You are to leave the Arno, go down to the Serchio, and find everything changed: a country with smaller features, tillage of more thrifty neatness, men of better manners, and women of how much more grace. Not only so, but the churches are more dignified, the oxen are larger and more placid, and they yoke them to the wains in a different way. The exquisite husbandry! From henceforward the country is deep ridge and hollow, every little mount is terraced to the top. Olives grow in smoky ranks on these hill-sides, vines between them, springing corn and flax carpet the glades, silvery masses of *carciofi*. The bottom land is well drained, and every furrow worked within an inch of its yield. All valleys are green in a sense: the valley of Arno is pale green. But in the Lucchese the soil is as red as rust, and the verdure looks the sappier for the contrast. Yet it is not to be denied that this neatness and snug-ordered comfort has its tiresome side. The Vale of Serchio is like a parlour; the Lucchesi comb their mother earth and put on her a clean smock. Between Cappiano and Capannori there is but one hunting-ground for Dian and the nymphs, one bare fell where you might hear the whoop of Pan; and that is the windy down of Altopascio just beyond a spinny of pines. Other sounds can be heard there—the moaning of the ghosts of dead and stricken men. At Altopascio, I need not tell the learned reader, one is on the scene of Castruccio's crowning act. Altopascio, a straggling village, with an old church on a green, lies on the slope

towards the leafy plain of Lucca, round about a little stream.

Castruccio Castracane degli Interminelli made himself lord of Lucca, Pisa, and Pistoja by sheer ability. If it seems his good fortune to have followed closely upon the trace of another fine captain, Uguccione della Faggiuola, the Aretine, the answer is that he had the wit to see where the straight course lay, and the moment to take up the chase. He came out of a prison to the lordship of Lucca; he helped the Pisans get rid of a tyrant with such masterful ease that they could not avoid choosing him for the next; he hemmed in Pistoja, picking up outpost after outpost, till he had that city in his pocket; he took an army through the mountains to the very heights above Genoa, and would have had the place but for a sudden call to the south. He beat the Florentines and their allies three times, and had them helpless within their walls for half a year. In the year of his death he was master of the south as far as San Casciano, of the north to the Garfagnana, of all the west. He had the whole of the Florentine contado, and was in the fair way to be Duke of Tuscany. He died at forty-seven of a feverish chill, with a grim pleasantry on his dry lips. A swift, ruthless, flashing man, imperially minded, with a boyish face, red hair, and high colour, a bare-headed fighter who never could get enough of it, and hero of innumerable legends, was Castruccio Castracane. Of these last the best is Sacchetti's, to this effect:—

Altopascio and its hero.

"Now I will shift my ground a little, and tell how Castruccio Interminelli, lord of Lucca, served

a chamber-hero, one of those rufflers who will do wonders against a wall. This Castruccio, one of the wisest, wariest, and most intrepid lords that have been in the world for many a day, who made war upon the Florentines, and gave them more than enough to think of, being their very cordial enemy, among other famous things did this one. He had taken the field in the Val di Nievole, and intended on such and such a morning to go and eat in a castle which he had snatched from the Florentines. Thither he sent a servant of his to prepare the tables and the food. This man goes to the castle to make his arrangements, and finds in it a great hall very proper for dining, adorned with coats-of-arms painted on the walls—among them the Lily of the Florentine nation. He picks up a lance, like a man who has an old grudge on hand, goes against this painted shield and defaces it from top to bottom. Time comes, and with it Castruccio and his gentlemen eager to dine. The valet awaits his master, runs to meet him in the hall, and cries: 'Look, my lord, look. Have I well served those traitor-arms or not?' Castruccio, like a wise man, says, 'God keep all: give us something to eat;' but put away the deed and the doer in his mind until he should want them. Not many days later the time came when his host and the Florentine faced each other, drawn up in line of battle, and before the enemy stood out a fine young man well armed, upon whose shield shone the red lily. Castruccio saw him, saw him as a champion, turned and beckoned that trusty fellow who had done so valiantly against the wall. 'Come you here,' says he, 'and repeat

Sacchetti's tale.

yourself. Not so long ago you gave hard knocks to the lily on the wall, and got a fine victory by your own account. Off you go now, armed as you choose, and cut that lily to pieces and win another triumph.' 'Ah, sir, you mock me,' says the varlet in dismay; but Castruccio, 'Not a bit of it. You go and you achieve, or I hang you to this bough.' Needs must that he meet the Florentine knight; and he did what he must. He met him in the open, and death on his side; for at first brunt the Florentine ran him through the body. Castruccio, with a calm face, turns to his chivalry, and says he, 'Mark that bout; be you ready, signori, to fight men, not plaster walls!'" This was the man who cooped the Florentines within their defences, and had a palio run round them of three courses—the first for men on horseback, the second for men on foot, and the third for "donne allegre," followers of the camp.

Altopascio was fought in September 1325. The taking of Pistoja had mortally stung the Florentines; no rest for them until they had their vendetta on Castruccio. **The great battle.** There was more than a grudge against him, indeed. They saw him master of all the country north of them and of every outlet to the west. They had allies in the north from whom they were cut off; they could not get to the sea while he held Pisa and Lucca together. He was choking Florence, and must be ridded. To do this they hired Raymond of Cardona, a good Condottier, knights from France and Burgundy, and allies from all the Guelf cities; massed by one means or other a force of nearly 20,000 men, of whom 5000 were cavalry under one Born, a

Burgundian, Raymond of Cardona's marshal; and, starting in July, they attacked Castruccio at two points. One of these was at Tizzano, a fortress in the Val d' Ombrone, which guarded Pistoja; the other was Altopascio, which in those days had a castle garrisoned by 500 men. It was one of a chain of castles—Vivinaia, Montechiaro, Porcari, etc.—which stretches all along the ridge and ends at Altopascio; but Altopascio is the most important precisely because the ridge does end there. You have only to stand on the height to see that if Cardona could get this place he had Lucca at his mercy, and with Lucca the heart of Castruccio's power. Therefore, while Cardona made a feint on Tizzano, Altopascio was his real objective.

I can't go into the minutiæ of the war: let it be enough that Castruccio concentrated on Tizzano, for some reason or another, and suffered Cardona get Altopascio. Perhaps he foresaw what happened next, and so took his time. Cardona, whether afraid of wanting water, or of the cold wind, or what not, did not stay where he was, but on the 9th of September went down the hill with his whole force and posted himself at the Abbey of Pozzevere in the marsh of Sesto. Even from here he might have done something; pushed up the water-course between Vivinaia and Porcari, and cut his enemies' line. But he sat still. If he thought Castruccio would leave him sitting he very much mistook his man.

Castruccio left him sitting exactly two days. Having sent for help from his friends the Milanese, and got the promise of Azzo Visconti and a thousand men, he took up the position which

Cardona had abandoned, the heights of Altopascio, and watched his slumberous enemy. On the 11th of the month Cardona tried to do what he ought to have done before — slip in between Montechiaro and Porcari. There was a way, of sorts, but it would never carry his baggage and the famous Martinella — that great bell on a towered car without which the Florentines never went into battle. Cardona sent out his pioneers to make him a road, and 400 cavalry under Master Urlenbach, a German, to support the pioneers. Castruccio from his heights sent down skirmishing parties; squadron was added to squadron until, in Villani's words, "there took place the prettiest, best sustained little fight you ever saw in Tuscany," which lasted some few hours, and four times gave rout to either side, retreating and advancing in orderly wise, after the fashion of a tournament. The Florentines might have won this engagement if Cardona had reinforced them at the right time and place; but instead of that he sent the bulk of his host to the head of the plain, where there was a great dyke and little room to deploy. Castruccio saw his chance and swept down the hill in strength, just as the dusk was falling in. Bad preparation for a pitched battle. Cardona retired in disorder to his abbey; Master Urlenbach was taken, the field remained with Castruccio, and with the field the way to Luoca.

After this Cardona sat still for eleven days, giving time to Azzo of Milan to come in with his reinforcements. It was wet and stormy weather, all the country a swamp; floods must have washed Cardona into action. He moved out on Sunday,

the 22nd September, in good order, and went to tackle Altopascio once more—which he never should have left, except for Lucca. He had, or thought he had, a sure retreat in case of the worst, either back to his swamps and thence to Calcinaja and the Arno, or by the Cerbaja Pass down to Ponte a Cappiano by the way you and I have just come. But, as we know, Castruccio had provided for him there. Nothing was done on Sunday; Cardona got the best position he could for the night, and Castruccio did not care to move without Azzo Visconti. He had that hero in Lucca, but could not get him to move out. Cardona, through spies, might have known that.

Before the sun was over the hill, on Monday morning, he attacked it from two sides, advancing in great strength to push Castruccio into the valley. It is by no means a high or steep place, but, rather, a broad rolling down, difficult only on the Cappiano side. It does not appear that there was much advantage of the ground; but some there must have been, because Castruccio only replied by short rushes of his cavalry, by alternate attack and retreat holding his own until nine o'clock in the forenoon. At that hour Azzo Visconti had got out of Lucca, and could be seen creeping among the willows of Capannori. Seeing him there, timing him beautifully, Castruccio advanced all his line and came crashing down the hill; Azzo joined him at the foot and took up the pace; so battle was joined with the Florentines, as I make out, just below the church, where the road crosses the railway and the bullock-carts wait for the trains to pass. At the first shock Born and his Frenchmen wavered and gave back.

If Cardona had moved up to support them all had been well; but he did not, so the flying French were driven into their friends and all stood huddling together. The battle was over in a few hours; but the slaughter endured until nightfall, and ended only with the drowning mercies of Cappiano. Born, says Villani, had been bought. A sure proof is that Galeazzo

BELLOSGUARDO, FLORENCE.

Visconti afterwards dubbed him a knight. There is no proof that he was not; and certainly, if money could have given Castruccio a victory, money would have been paid. Raymond of Cardona and his son, with some of the greatest in Florence, the camp, baggage, furniture, treasure, Martinella and all, fell to Castruccio. That must have been a fine entry of his, as conqueror, into Lucca, when all the men and women of the place went out to meet him as if he were a king.

Before him went the Martinella of Florence on a car; oxen drew it trapped in the Florentine red and white, blazoned with the Florentine lily. Behind the car walked the prisoners — great Florentines all—and Messer Raymond of Cardona with a lighted candle which he was to offer to San Martino in the cathedral. They sang mass and Te Deum: it was Saint Martin's day. After that Castruccio gave the notables a feast, and then sent them all to prison. Many ransomed themselves. Castruccio got a hundred thousand gold florins from them, says Villani.

This was the heyday of his power; but he did strenuously so long as he lived. The Emperor Otto came to Pisa as his friend and ally, and made him Duke of Lucca. Old Bishop Guy of Arezzo, who had stood by him throughout, fought with him, and been excommunicated with him, quarrelled with him at last over this great condescension of his master's. They were joking and laughing one day, and Castruccio laughed the longer. Bishop Guy complained to the Emperor, and the Emperor shrugged his shoulders. The old warrior took offence and flounced out of Pisa into the Maremma, where he sickened, made his peace with the Church, and died a good death, as they call it. More of him when I get to Arezzo and see his storied tomb, with more swords on it than peaceful crosiers. Castruccio died at forty-seven years old, and is buried in Saint Francis' church in Lucca. I shall take you to his tomb anon.[1] He was a great man, full of terrible cheer, incredibly swift and crafty, just to

[1] For Villani's account of the manner of his death, see Chapter XXII., Appendix.

his subjects, treacherous abroad. "Where he could vanquish by fraud he would never try to do it by force; for he said that it was the victory, and not the manner of getting it, that gained glory for a man." This is very strange doctrine, you may think; and yet I don't know. It may well be a matter of opinion, whether it be the more glorious to risk the cutting of your throat or the cutting of your schemes.

There are weary miles from Altopascio to Lucca, which remains recluse to the very last, deeply hidden in green leaves.

CHAPTER XIV

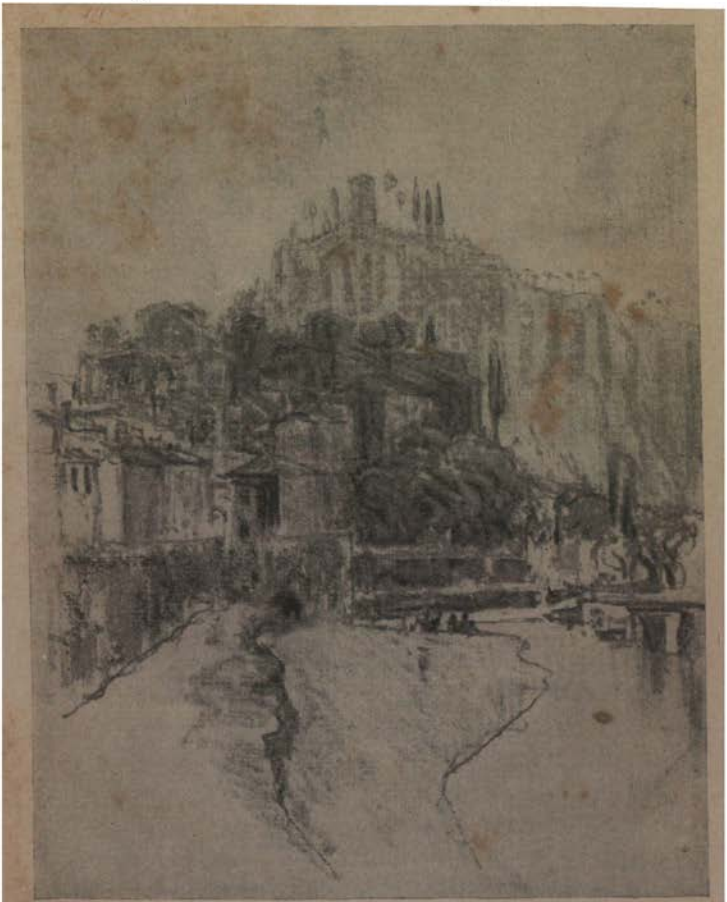
THE GRACES OF LUCCA

THESE graces of Lucca are very much by the way,[1] not explicit at all: the flushed side of San Michele, the silver dust which makes all San Frediano pure—happy accidents these. By chance the red Guinigi tower grew three ilexes upon its top, and there you may see them now, glossy as bronze against the blue, like dark flowers upon a rosy stem. Accident, of course, that a pigeon should choose there to be rid of an acorn—yet what other Tuscan city has bred birds so heavenly disposed? This, among Lucca's graces, grew out of the soil; so also did this other, that the Lucchesi built most happily in brick, having red earth over all the valley. Now, as half the pride of architecture is to stamp the grandiose with humanity, to make mountains, let me say, which yet shall savour of home, your builder of bricks has sure advantage over him who works in marble. Here, substantially, all the great houses and most of the churches are of this comfortable makeshift; some few are

Accidental graces.

[1] This may be a reason why nobody ever goes there. Lucca is one of the least visited towns in Tuscany.

sheeted with marble, and one nearly spoiled in the doing—I mean San Michele; the best are



MONTELUPO.

left alone. San Frediano, the best of them all, is brown, San Francesco and San Romano, the two preaching churches, are red. Happy was

Lucca in that the Carrarese, hoeing, as Dante says, his rocky glebe, lay out of her jurisdiction. The greatest of her sons, Castruccio Castracane, did his worst to make a kingdom of Lucca which should enfold all Tuscany; but again, in his death the city was blessed. Lastly, the trees with which she is girt and otherwise adorned must be set down to the grace of God, who chose for her the plane, as for Padua the breezy aspen, for Florence the cypress, and for Rome the pine. Disposer supreme! No more dainty mantling could have been found for a place which, from whatever side you come, appears dipped in a thicket of nightingales. In spring these trees make a gauzy veil of grey and brown; in the autumn you go under pleached alleys of silver and green. Fair and gentle, too, are the memories of Lucca. In spite of Alessio Interminelli and his seraglio (as to which see, if you choose, 18 Inferno, 122), Dante calls it the town of Santa Zita. She was a little servant girl, both pretty and good, whom her master did most ardently invite to stray. But she shook her head at him, and chose a better service. She speaks to me much more than the Volto Santo, of Lucca, which I should figure, if I were a painter, as a modest young woman, gently insisting upon virtue, but with nothing acrid in her refusals. Or why should I not choose that quiet lady of whom the Florentine has the heart to speak in his superb, easy way? Why not Gentucca?

Santa Zita.

> Woman is born, not wimpled yet
> To make my city sweet to thee,
> However men may chasten it,

says Bonagiunta, the old minstrel, prophesying.

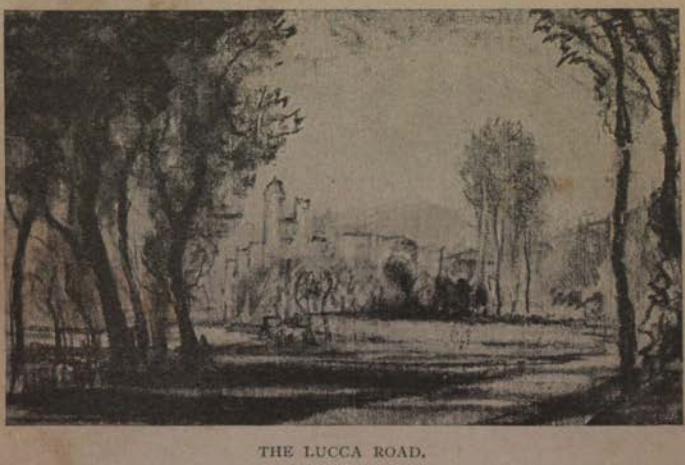
Dante was in Lucca in 1314, being a year short of his fiftieth; Gentucca may have been anything between seventeen and one-and-twenty. I know —the learned know—no more about her: the girl was an episode, as women must be content to be for poets. Fortunate for her that her name gave a rhyme for *Lucca!* She has made great sport for the scholiasts. Was she married? Was she a baggage? Did she, on the other hand, illume a Platonic candle? What does it matter? She was fair, her name was Gentucca, and so were her deeds. She made Lucca sweet for Dante; he tossed her lightly in a terzet. What more can woman do for poet, or poet for woman? I hope she is in Santa Zita's bosom by now.

Her children.

In these coy and silent streets, under the temperate spell of these reticent house-fronts and serene, grey churches, your feeling chimes in tune with the history of the place and with what you can find out concerning the dead Lucchesi. They were a diligent and docile race, not slothful in business by any means, but not fervent in spirit either, nor magnanimous. Castruccio the Great arose, an erring comet, and blazed, and vanished. He left a burning trail, in which Lucca made haste to hide herself. She produced no more Interminelli of the sort: one is tempted to believe Machiavelli's pretty story about him, that Monna Such-an-One, unwedded daughter of an Interminelli, found him by chance under a gooseberry bush. Then there was Burlamacchi. Burlamacchi was to Cosimo Primo what a *zabajone* would be to a hearty eater; or it was as if a staid

housewife should suddenly determine to play the romp. Burlamacchi said too much and did too little, scandalised his neighbours and estranged the lovers of his virtuous hours. Of such were the disastrous divagations of Lucca from the golden mean. To clench the argument, you shall try her in the arts. Matteo Civitale is the glory of the Lucchesi, their only artist of consequence, and their condemnation. Compare him no more highly than with Mino of Fiesole, you will find him an industrious, dull dog. He knows the rules, but not how to break them; he rubs away at his marbles, smoothing out the very character of the fine stone. He sets his *putti* holding shields, or clinging about the horns of an altar; he tries to give them a cock of the head in Desiderio's manner, urges them to straddle their legs like Mino's pert *bimbi*, throws up Sebastian's chin that he may seem to languish under arrows. All to no purpose; he might as well have done wax-works. Ten paces from his altar in the church is Della Quercia's Ilaria—all woman in a dead girl. The diligent, sober, docile Lucchesi! Now see wherein they excelled—just exactly where Giotto did *not*, according to Sacchetti's salted story. Call to your mind John Arnolfini and his wife, as Van Eyck saw and pictured them once in Bruges, amid much domestic dignity and promise. This composed, smooth-faced, sedate, wise man was of Lucca, and shall be my chosen emblem of his nation's virtues. Set beside him whom you will from Florence. Van der Goes did a Portinari for Santa Maria Nuova. If you go to the Uffizii to see it, you will find in the same gallery the founder of the Medici

house, common parent of its two lines, Giovanni Bicci by name—a hard-bitten old chafferer, restless, every nerve throbbing, mean, and edgy as a knife. Either of these men has the true Florentine grain; both are flinty and sharp-cornered; neither has dignity of parade. Neither aspired to that or had leisure for it. They had their money, or would have it; let the world



THE LUCCA ROAD.

wag, they could shrug. They never shrugged in Lucca over lack of manners. So John Arnolfini is like his town, which, seated prosperously, hidden in a bower of green wealth, has a peculiar grace, and sets great store by it. The beauty of the ordered, middle-class life is Lucca's; Monday thrift and Sunday peace. It is full of such amenity, has smallness, extreme elegance, a dove-coloured, Quaker habit. It is like a thoughtful, pretty woman, to be wooed devoutly, not stormed. "The inhabitants of Lucca are

exceedingly civil to strangers above all places in Italy, and speak the purest Italian. Besides, the ladies here are very conversable, and the religious women not at all reserved." That is John Evelyn: Lucca was kind to him.

Great churches.

"If my readers," quoted Sir Walter from a *British Essayist*, "if my readers at any time remark that I am particularly dull, they may be assured there is a design under it." And if I, in turn, fetch after the manner of Herr Baedeker or the late Mr. Hare, let it be owned afterwards that I have propped my thesis. The four great churches of Lucca, then, which are, to wit, the Cathedral of Saint Martin, Saint Mary's Without, Saint Michael's and Saint Fredian's, are of the same order, the Lombard-Romanesque, copied, I suppose, by Pisa. In my poor judgment that arrogant city did not improve upon the model, though Herr Baedeker is of a different opinion. Like all other fine things here these churches are very solid, and very rational where they have been left as their contrivers designed; but like them also they are hard to be seen, and you have to count them as a condiment in the dish, one of the many subtle flavours which cause this town to have a clean, tonic taste upon the palate. How noble an appearance they would make, if they made one at all, you shall presently judge when you walk upon the ramparts and see a little of San Frediano.

Saint Martin's.

The Cathedral is Saint Martin's, as the porch proclaims; all his chivalrous history flanks the west door. But the façade is embroidered with sculpture; arcades first super-

imposed with great effect, the whole is worked over and over until, with nothing remarkable and everything wrought, the complacent eye

CATHEDRAL, LUCCA.

takes in the mass. It is a dædal effect, as they say, an effect of quilted brocade. Niccolò Pisano has crowded a *Deposition* into a lunette • with, perhaps, more ingenuity than

good fortune; the apostles are aligned on either side the mystery—hoary, venerable patriarchs of Roman aspect; over their heads lozenges and medallions hold the signs of the Zodiac, the three Great Virtues and the four Lesser. The columns are garlanded, the capitals are feathery; there is a maze hard by the door, which is a game to youth and to eld a fetish, to be solved with the finger and devoutly kissed. Let me not forget the sequence of the months, done in Giotto's manner, with candid love of good husbandry. Man warms himself, ploughs, sows, reaps; he gathers his olives and grapes, treads out the wine, crushes down the oil, provides against the winter. The *bourgeois*, you perceive, striving after the *bourgeois* reward. And getting it: in December, rest after toil, he very properly kills a pig. All this and more, whatsoever the men of Lucca may do or fear or hope for, you will find incised about the porch of Saint Martin's. Inside, with much of Civitale, including his gaudy and foolish *Tempietta* (shrine of the Sacred Face), there is some harvesting for a quiet eye: peace, and a level light, great breadth and dignity where transepts meet, and, in one of these, Ilaria del Caretto, "couching supine her beauties lily white." Over this immortal piece it is hard to be temperate. Critics have cavilled at such and such parts of it: one went so far as to say in my hearing that not so could the breast lie on a dead woman. Are we copying dead women then? Is the eye of genius to play pander to the sun, and serve Della Quercia no better than a photographer his box of glasses? Another

Ilaria.

hardy discoverer of museum-specimens said that Pheidias would have done better. Would he though? Pheidias could have done no more than put woman into a woman. He might have done as much, but he would have let Ilaria go by. Even he might have given you death, if he could have brought himself to contemplate it.[1] But Della Quercia trod the verges of life and death, of character and kind. He put all Ilaria in, and the article of death, They have but newly folded her hands, and drawn her eyelids down. This arrowy lady while she lived was mistress of the rosy tower which is crowned by trees, third wife, to that end, of a very potent and futile lord, as we shall shortly see.

The sacristan.

The sacristan, who takes his charge seriously, will tell you the merits of a great silver cross, the *Croce de' Pisani*, which Lucca took from Pisa in Castruccio's day, and never returned. He will show you, too, the best thing that Civitale ever did, and the smallest. a portrait in relief of the head of Pietro di Noceto, a sharp-faced humanist. But of all he had to say or do I prefer his story of the travelled Englishmen—not Mr. Ruskin—who made a drawing of Ilaria upon her bier, and promised a copy to the sacristan. The Englishman went away, the copy never came. "Then," said the sacristan, "I knew that some serious thing had occurred; for this signore was an Englishman." God bless the man! I wish I had his faith in Englishmen. But the fact is, he was right. He inquired, he told me, of every

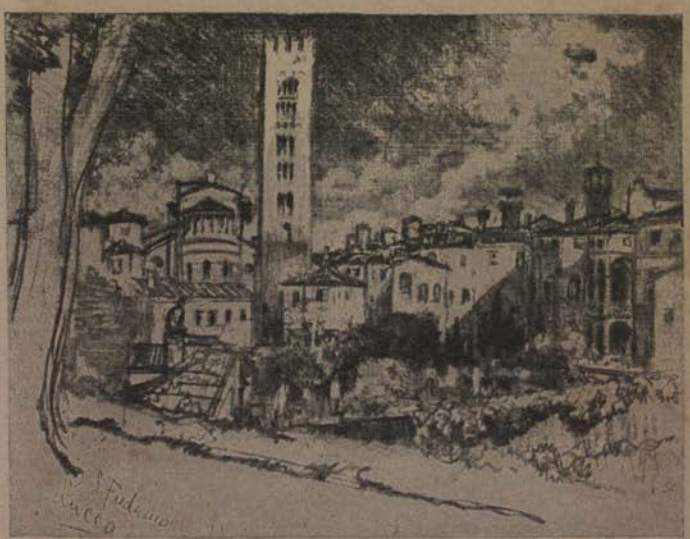
[1] If he had, no doubt he would have followed the practice of all his neighbours and rendered the dead alive.

traveller who came through Lucca, describing minutely (as all Tuscans can) the person and habits of the illustrious. His name he had never known. By these means he did discover that his Englishman had started in a ship for Leghorn, had died on the voyage out, and been buried at sea. If the drawing of Ilaria was not in his portmanteau the mischief was in it. There was no scruple of doubt in the sacristan's loyal mind. He has in his custody, though he thinks little of it, a picture of much unobtrusive merit—one of those innocent casual things of which old Ghirlandajo had the secret, and made his profit like the good artisan that he was; a piece all gold and crimson and blue, flowers and chaffinches and children's faces; a holy conversation, as they call it, where Mary, as a fair child, holds a fairer on her lap. Venerable bishops, clear-eyed boys and girls, form her court, gravely assisting her to do nothing at all; a couple of babies hold back the curtains of silk damask. Trivial, lovely thing, it is a sacred nursery-rhyme, a page out of a fairy-tale, and quite as true to him who is young enough to read it. "There's nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so." *Speriamo dunque!*

I must not omit to admire the piazza in which this fine church stands as one of three. Opposite, in a garden, behind a garden-wall (always suggestive in a city), is San Giovanni, the baptistery, with a front of green and white marble and a warm-coloured cupola. The Archbishop's house, of faded geranium bricks, is here; other tall buildings, a fountain and basin in an uneven breadth of flag-stones; and (crown of all) the

stern grey belfry, made aerial by arcades of pure marble. Like all else in Lucca this has no positive beauty, but charms by choiceness; it has neither the bravado of Pisa, nor the piercing loveliness of Siena to disturb your heart. It is reticent, silvery, has a bloom, is elusive, shuns to be admired.

Go, then, to San Frediano, which looks best



S. FREDIANO, LUCCA.

from the walls. You shall, therefore, walk upon the ramparts, made cushiony in May with dropt blossoms, until you have passed the singing girls at the silk mill, and the gate of Saint Donatus the Bishop. Anon you will behold an august basilica, pearl-grey relieved with white marble, having a shallow apse treated in the classical mode with Corin-

San Frediano.

thian columns and entablature. Beside it, in splendid partnership, a tall rectangular tower, really oblong, makes up a figure of honourable age and service. Than this church there is nothing more weighty in Lucca. It has a nave and four aisles, no transepts—a majestic simplicity which is far from the Gothic standard, but rather puts the Christian at ease with the world as he finds it. "Behold, I am with you always." This is what San Frediano has declared to the Lucchesi from the seventh century onwards, if one may credit the books.

There are some agreeable frescoes within, after Francia's manner—one by the door, one whole chapel full of them—rich and cool in colour, neither serious nor too seriously intended, but pleasant and smooth, inspiring that gentler sort of piety which is half benevolence and half good manners. You may not go to extremes in a basilica. But you may be as opaque as you please. For some such reason Della Quercia was the artist, and San Frediano lucky to get him. The Trenta tombs—Frederigo's and his wife's—are his; low reliefs designed for the pavement originally, now reared up foolishly into the wall. It was by no means necessary for the Quattrocento sculptors to have beautiful persons to deal with, nor were they ever tempted to shirk what they found. This Trenta couple are old and seamy with care, but noble as may be in spite of it; for in graving theirs Della Quercia had another portrait on hand, that of their master and occupant. So here you have him inhabiting the old shells of the Trenta pair, Death, a careful tenant; and into their worn lineaments that wise

despot has breathed for a long term of years his repose, his dignity, and all his solemn accomplishments. Monna Berta, Liperata, whatever her name may have been—Trenta's wife—bears to have been handsome once: you can hardly tell now. I should say that she had borne many children to her dew-lapped lord. But, as usual, Death's portrait is the best of the three. Opposite to them, in high relief under Gothic canopies, are a Madonna and Saints by the same artist, grand, blind, rooted heathen divinities, emanations of a rugged but kindly soil. With these fine things in your head you will leave San Frediano's well content, and the better yet if you avoid a sorry chapel on the south side of the door, with the worst Della Robbia in it contained between the devil and the light of day.

There remain some score of churches, of which I shall only notice two. San Romano shall be one, a plain parallelogram of brick with an outside pulpit, attentive to which I can see Master John Arnolfini standing in a company of his gossips, his hatchet-face under a flat cap, his thin hands decently wrapped in his sleeves. This is the Dominican church, ruinous outside, inside hideous beyond description, degraded by thick stucco, shabby cherubim, plaster-wreaths, and other simulacra of the Seicento, which, believing nothing, whitewashed everything. But behind the altar lies San Romano himself, and over his dust his effigy in alabaster—credible and without whitewash. It shows him a pathetic, pretty youth in the habit of a legionary, with curls, and folded hands, and a placid, waxen face. Civitale made

San Romano.

it; the lad himself suffered under Decius. Last, San Francesco comes, long, square, empty, and red. Gothic this, as the Tuscans understood that love-affair, and as gaunt as Santa Croce. It has a slim tower, like the Garisenda at Bologna, and, for congregation, sacks of flour and ships' biscuits. There lay, or lies yet, Castruccio Castracane, the great commander; nor do I know that one could wish him fitter monument than the provand of soldiers.

The glories of Lucca under that magnanimous warrior were, maybe, none of her seeking; but Castruccio being dead, it was Lucca had to pay. Dominion over Pisa and Pistoja, constant menace to Florence, territory in the mountains and tribute from the south—all these great things were blown away with a breath so soon as he was dead. The breath was Cæsar's, hot against a Guelfic city. Lewis the Bavarian made nothing of Castruccio's son; of whom, indeed, there was nothing to be made. He put an Imperial Vicar into the town, took away all dominion outside the bare limits of the *contado*, and set a heavy poll-tax on the citizens. This they could not or would not pay; so then the Emperor put Lucca into the market, to go to the highest bidder. In 1329 it was bought and sold—a year after Castruccio's death, who had had all Tuscany on his knees. The whirligig of time was never slow to move in that bickering land.

After Castruccio.

For forty years long the servitude and shame lasted, with new and ever new masters, but the same misery. The Genoese, who had first bought, sold their bargain to John of Bohemia,

the blind king; he again to Mastino of Verona, Can Grande's son. Florence had her next, and Pisa afterwards. Charles IV., the restless, wand-whittling little Kaiser, set her free; and she put up an altar in Saint Martin's, "To God the Liberator and the tutelary Saints," which is there still. Then came the turn of tyrants

Guinigi.

THE RAMPARTS, LUCCA.

from her own lap. Paolo Guinigi was one of them, owner of Ilaria del Caretto and other wives, to say nothing of two rose-coloured palaces and the tree-crowned tower. He sat on an uneasy throne for thirty years, temporising and bribing mostly, trying for the *juste milieu* between his great compeers. So, in Florence, Lorenzo de' Medici tried later, and did it. But Guinigi! If he could set off Milan against Florence, now, and sit

serene upon the balancing-point! At first it did seem possible. Visconti of Milan professed to be his firm friend; old Cosimo de' Medici came ambassador from Florence with letters addressed to the Magnificence of Paolo Guinigi —*Osservantissimo Signore suo*, and so on—in his despatch-box. It all seemed splendid and easy; one can see in the mind's eye the keen young Ilaria walking the long corridors of the two neighbour palaces, and all the fine company paying her court; one can imagine the Magnifico himself, an indulgent lord when things went well, pinching her ear. The stone benches are still left where the servants sat waiting for their masters, and the rings to which they tied up the big trampling horses. All else is a wreck. The windows have been bricked up, the moth and the worm have the panels, and mice the wainscots. As for Ilaria, they carried her to Saint Martin's in her prime; but the fate of the Magnificent Guinigi was that of his house; for the worms had him at their leisure in a Milanese prison—the fruit of as pretty a bit of complicated bribery as can be found in all Italian history.

A good story of rascals.

Exactly and shortly, what happened was this. Visconti—that fat-jowled scoundrel with the goatee whom you may see effigied in his Certosa at Pavia—alarmed the Florentines by his activities in Romagna, so they sent messengers for help from the Magnificence of Guinigi. Well and good—but just so also did Visconti. A situation singularly delicate for Guinigi upon his balancing-point, but not unknown to history before his day. It had always been a maxim of Tuscan diplomacy to act against

Florence at a pinch; and Guinigi so acted. Seven hundred Lucchesi went up into Lombardy under the conduct of his son. The Florentines were not likely to forget that, nor did they. For when the war, if such chequer-board work can be called a war, had dragged on to a peace which was but a move in the game—peace of Ferrara, 1428, to be exact—Florence and Milan made terms; but terms from which Guinigi and his Lucca were left out. Next year sixteen thousand Florentines, under Neri Capponi, laid siege to Lucca. The affair was serious enough to bring a fine architect into the field—Brunelleschi, no less—and a great general. Francesco Sforza came down from Lombardy, ostensibly from his master at Milan, ostensibly to help the Lucchesi, actually, as events proved, to sell himself and his sword to extraordinary advantage.

Brunelleschi, who could certainly design a dome, made a muddle of his sapping. His plan was to turn the Serchio, that river which, some thousand years before, San Frediano himself had turned by miracle. Make a dam in the river, said Brunelleschi, head up the water; then, when everything is ready, turn it on to the walls, and you will see. Capponi doubted, but was overruled; the works were begun, continued, and ended. A huge dam was made between San Piero a Vico and the city wall, at the same time a dyke to keep the camp safe at Capannori. To this the Lucchesi countered with a dyke on their side the dam, and then, one fine night, issued in good force of picks and mattocks, and made a breach in the Florentine dyke. The dam overflowed, the Florentines were washed out of camp,

left everything behind them—baggage, standards, siege-train, everything—and once more made rueful acquaintance with the downs of Altopascio. It was just at this moment of crisis that Francesco Sforza's spears were to be seen on the hill-road from Pescia; and the question then turned, as he had intended it should turn, on which side he was coming to act.

Of Sforza it is no injustice to say that he favoured the side with more money to spend. He was there to be hired, but if he had a preference in the matter it was against Guinigi. For once upon a time, as it had happened, seeking a hireling cut-throat, the Magnificent had passed over Sforza for that inspired cripple Piccinnino; and had done wisely, so far as could then be judged. Piccinnino, as well as being an untirable soldier, a perfect demon of bloodshed for all his dragging leg and writhen body, was mainly a little gentleman.[1] Events, however, were proved to have required a longer sight than Guinigi's. Piccinnino just now was at work in Calabria; Sforza was here with this old grudge against Guinigi, and Guinigi had to pay.

The bitter thing (for in this see-sawing tyrant I can find no tragic thing) is that by boldness he might even now have saved himself. He had bribed Sforza, outbidding the Florentines; Sforza had attacked his enemies and raised the siege of Lucca. Then came the moment when a victorious ally might fairly reckon on a welcome from the city he had succoured. Sforza looked

[1] It is true, if we may trust his apologist, that he hanged his wife with his own hands in the presence of the host; but there were reasons. In spite of that, he was rarely chivalrous for an Italian.

for an ovation, triumphant entry, ladies to make

THE GUINIGI TOWER, LUCCA.

flowery the gates, clergy and choir to sing him towards the eye of Heaven, a feast, a laurel,

and his ducats. He should have had them; he should have been fed into magnanimity. Instead, he was met outside the walls by the Magnificence of Paolo, who would pay the covenanted price, but by no means let the hero within the walls. In a general way there is much to be said for his refusal; easy as it was to get a condottier into your city, it was a ticklish business to get him out again. However—Sforza pocketed his money, and probably shrugged. What is most certain is that he made directly off and sold himself to the Florentines whom he had just drubbed. But the Florentines had the same doubts as Guinigi. They gave the man 50,000 ducats upon these terms, that he should leave Tuscan soil and march back into Lombardy. Paid handsomely by either side, what had Sforza to do but obey? He made leisurely preparations for the march homewards, leisurely enough for this very curious sequel.

The Lucchesi believed that Guinigi, in refusing entry to Sforza, was paving his own way to treachery. They thought that he intended to sell them to Florence. Ridiculous; but this is the account. Certain of the ancients went over to Sforza with this fearful suspicion, and Sforza, with the money of both sides in his pocket, now saw his way to that of a third. He delayed his preparations and waited. On the night of the 14th August 1430, the Lucchesi rose, *a rumore*, surprised their Magnificent in his bed, dragged him out of his rose-coloured palace into streets alive with men and torches, ringing with cries of *Popolo!* and *Libertà!* and handed him over to Sforza, who had already received his third fee.

He was to get one more—the fourth—bounty. The hardy mercenary entered Lucca next day in triumph, received as saviour of the State. He witnessed the sack of the Guinigi houses, the pair of them, and no doubt got his share of the spoils. Finally, to induce him out of the town, the ancients paid him 12,000 more ducats. And then he went back to Lombardy, and Guinigi went with him. That poor wretch was imprisoned at Pavia by his friend Visconti, and died there in two years' time, "heart-broken" say the books. So much for the *juste milieu* in high Tuscan politics.

It is surely not a little curious that this low-lying, fertile, snug, and thrifty Lucca should have been the one State of all Tuscany to escape the clutches of Florence. But so it is. One by one the cities went down—mettlesome Pistoja, proud Pisa, sharp-tongued Arezzo, Volterra upon her impregnable rock, Cortona, Borgo, Città di Castello; the fall of Siena herself—last act of the Tuscan tragedy—the formation of the Grand Duchy, did not drag Lucca into the vortex these great convulsions made. From the day in which she got rid of Guinigi, an aristocratic commonwealth patronised by the Empire, she remained free until just a hundred years ago. So she was seen in her kindly old age by the vivacious Monsieur de Brosses, when he travelled about Italy in 1739-40, applying to all and sundry his test of *sal gallicum*. He was very facetious at the expense of this little republic, which consisted in his day of the city and eleven villages,[1] a Council of sixty notables,

Latter-day Lucca.

[1] His liveliest sally is this: It rained continuously throughout his

three secretaries of State, a gonfalonier, four ushers, and a *garde-suisse,* which could only line one side of the way when the Senate went down to deliberate, because there was not enough of it for both. He saw that the country-side was worked like a market garden, and approved of the law against the wearing of swords. Still, then, you may detect the *bourgeois* in the notable. "Observe, also," says he, "that the Jesuits have never been able to squeeze themselves into Lucca, whatsoever shifts they may have used." Through all his raillery it is easy to read that the graces of Lucca remained the quiet, the orderly, and the real. But history was still a-making; there was a greater condottier than Castruccio to come. There was Buonaparte; there were Elisa, the Bourbons, the Austrians, Cavour and Garibaldi in store for Tuscany. Lucca became a principate. Offspring of Elisa may have been that Prince of Lucca who paid a visit to our Court in 1840 or so, and was unkindly—I know not if by merit—called Filthy Lucre. He, at any rate, and his likes, came about the city, added a little husbandry here and there—a bridge, an aqueduct, a bank to the Serchio, some roads—and departed to their destinies, having left small mark upon an industrious, mild-mannered, and frugal race. The Lucchesi have thriven from the time of John Arnolfini and his gravid, obedient wife, and I am sure they thrive still. They were always noted for singing; and now, as you walk the leafy ramparts, you can hear the mill-girls tuning their

stay; whereupon he remarks in a letter to his friend Charles upon the extraordinary thing it is that such a little republic should have such quantities of rain. A mainly pleasant, very frivolous man,

merry throats as they card the silk and the humming shuttles fly. Contented with a few things, you will leave the little town, I hope, with a memory or two, when you have seen it fairly; as, *item*, a shady walk, a convocation of dignified shrines, a few old towers of silver and brown, the image of one great man (sleeping calmly under meal-sacks) and the fragrance of one beautiful lady. Few cities in Tuscany will give you as good.

CHAPTER XV

LUCCA TO PISA

FROM his high grass bastion at Lucca, San Donato pointed me the way across the marsh, his pastoral staff benevolently extended over waving fields of buttercups. There was no wind that morning for the kites of the long-skirted Seminarists; and afar off over the golden meads you could only just see Monte San Giuliano. That mountain which once hid mortal enemies from each other—

Outlook of San Donato: Ripafratta.

Which Lucca hides from Pisan eyes,

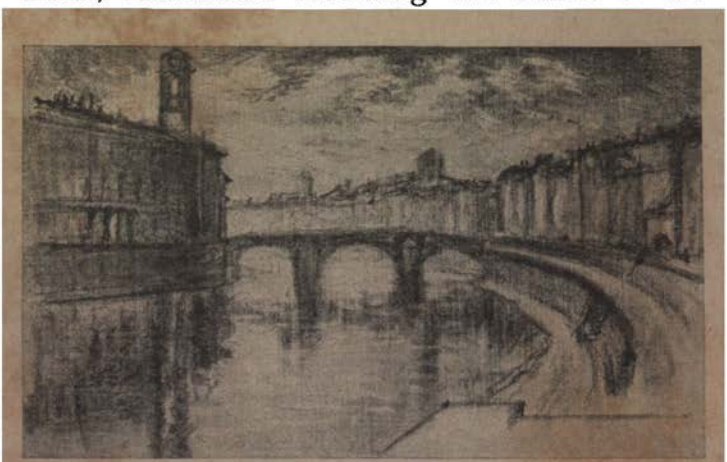
was veiled in the midst of great heat. Not until I was nearly below his breast could I see how closely wooded he is, how velvety with fir and ilex—and to get there was a two hours' business; for you have to follow the Serchio's reach towards the sea, and accost the hills first at a narrow throttle, whereof Nozzano is the barbican and Ripafratta holds the keys. If I were minded once more to discourse of wars, Ripafratta or Nozzano would furnish me a text — Nozzano clumped together on a rock, with church, castle, village, carved, as it seems, out of one piece,

blended in one, rearing one ragged head to the weather, but dipped to the midriff in bright green; Ripafratta, too, hardy little mercenary of war, in red and brown clouts—or, if you like, a camp wench, anybody's price. But I am aweary of Tuscan campaigning, which was like nothing so much as the bickering of street dogs in an Eastern town—a snarling encounter, a sudden rush, uproar, indiscriminate ripping and rolling,

PISA.

and then peace, when the battles are swept into a side-alley or fire another quarter of the city. What does it matter if Lucca had Ripafratta for a year, and Pisa for two years more, when Florence got all in the end? We drove through the dishevelled place, spying for the first sight of Pisa, and getting it soon. For when you have left the hillsides where are the villas of old Pisan princes—of Spanish dignity and seclusion—and the woods and shady places loved by Lucca, at

Rigoli you are in the Pisan Maremma. From the very edge of this treeless flat, over pale earth caked and cracked, scummy ditches and scant grass, you may look to a line where sea and sky are one, and (with Dante's traveller) in that bar of fire and blended mist "hail the tremulous sea-shore." Anon, in that same golden distance, you will see three solemn bulks, mammoths savouring the solace of the



PISA.

water; one heaped like a mountain of flame-colour, one with a placid back shining wet, one reeling apart; huge creatures at their mysteries, all alike shadowy in heat. You are now in touch with what makes Pisa famous, and stays the pilgrims all agog for Rome—the trinity of marble, first and last testimony of Pisa in pride. Pisa herself lies long and low to the south—belfries, cupolas, and thrust-up loggias. Very far away, beyond all this temporal power, a cloud-

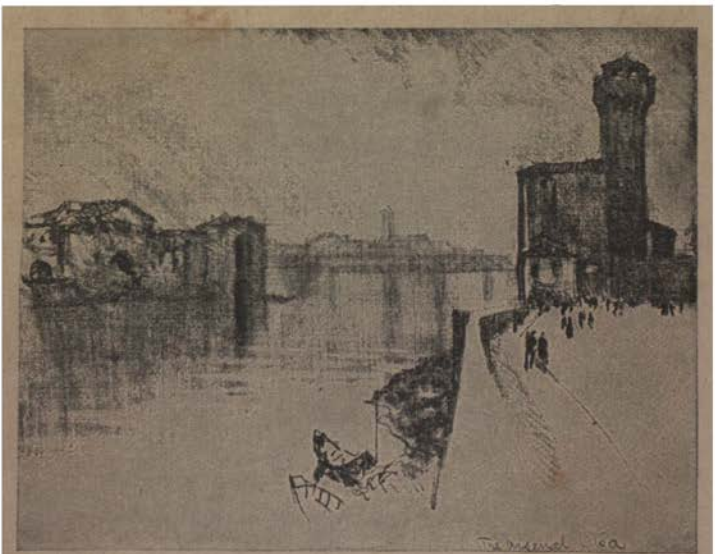
country stands half revealed, the blue folds of the hills which keep Siena inviolate.

True delta country is this, dry, shadowless, full of smart to the eyes; one is but ten miles or so, yet worlds away, from the green bowers of Lucca. Expect no delicate mysteries here, no beauties hidden, no coy, reluctant streets, no arching shade or grassy walks; but be prepared for a miracle. You drive directly to a brick wall, the road turns a sharp angle at the gate, your horses scrape and slide on the flags as you pull up for the *dazio*: in a green field, suddenly, the three giants glare at you, as if you had disturbed their peace, flaunting crimson in your face, white light, angry purple, lace of stone, streams of orange rust—

The miracle.

CAMPO SANTO, PISA.

monstrous, overwhelming, blinding and intolerable. They subdue you by their size, by their breaking of every known, comfortable rule. The Tower of Babel (which dared to bully God) must have been like this, and like this thrust aside for its pains; this great domed heap might stifle more than the Christian graces; this shining



THE ARSENAL, PISA.

church could never ape Christian humility. Imagine the sight: a broad green field, and three colossi vaunting their splendours alone in it! It may well be doubted if the travelled world has a greater sight to show than this stupendous group on the edge of a little dead town. Accident helps design; it had needed the concurrence to be so shocked by Pisa. At Siena you may have a better view of a great church,

and a wonderful tiger-moth it looks, swooning there on the rock. But the belfry adds no wonder; the baptistery is out of sight. In colour, at least, the Florentine group is far more lovely —if you could only see it. Arezzo has a noble church — Orvieto, Assisi — one can name two score. But these things! They dazzle, they

LUNGARNO, PISA.

are alone to dazzle. They brave it like brides, and each is more insolent than the last. Pick them to pieces if you choose: it is easy; but get your breath first. There is something here which makes judgment drunk. The cupola is more than Byzantine—it is Russian. But the purple bloom of it! But the lacery out of which this strange flower grows! Is the baptistery overweening? Does it make out the gate of the Pisan heaven

to be greater than the goal? Is not the belfry an undercut spiral, a core of stone with a gallery twisted about it? Is it lawful to treat stone as if it were pith of rushes? All this may be true, and yet make no matter. See them at dawn before the shadows fall, see them raying heat and light like suns at noon, see them under the

DOOR OF CATHEDRAL, PISA.

stare of the moon—and cavil no more. You will come to think them essays of the Demiurge, and will as soon dare to approve the everlasting hills.

Of the Pisans and their fate.

The Pisans, having built for themselves this church, baptistery, and belfry, which were and are still *mirabilia mundi*, and having added to them an acre for their dead, than which you will find no better contented

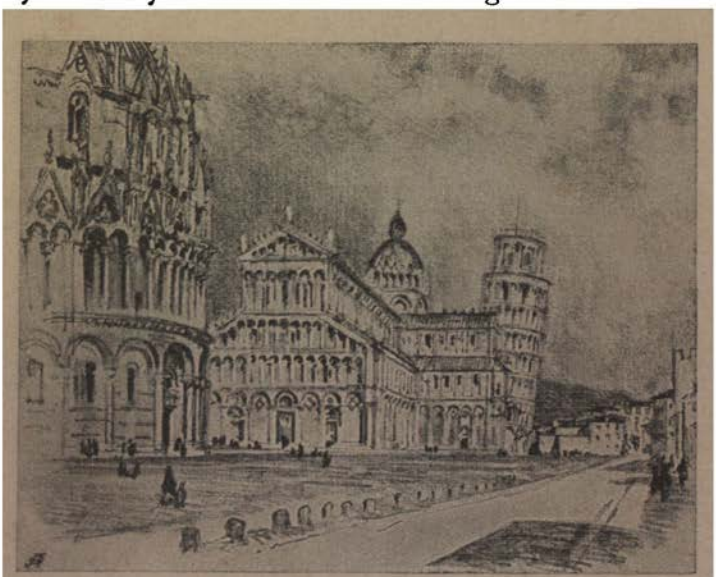
themselves with so great feats of art, and built no more; but taking to politics and warfare, considering the advantage over Genoa, conversion of Saracens, lordship of islands, conquest of Tuscany, and such like, became the shuttlecocks of various tyrants, mortgaged themselves to get out of debt, were then bought by Florence from

PISA.

a Milanese rip, and made slaves for five centuries. The most arrogant nation between Po and Tiber, with the cleanest pretensions to Roman descent —and Etruscan if they had but known it—they paid the dearest for this nobility of theirs, and found the Florentines (like upstarts buying ancestry) as well able to purchase honour as any other market stuff. Here you have the history of Pisa in a nutshell; and her streets and squares

and melancholy Spanish air will speak it for you better than I can. Of Pisa in pride those great buildings are all that is left—standing apart from the rest, as well they may.

Pisa in subjection—the Medici imprint, the taint of the Grand Dukes—begins the moment you turn your back on the Leaning Tower. You



PISA.

need go no farther than a bowshot to smell the fard and hair-powder, and see in your mind's eye the sedan chairs go swaying down the bare street, the starched and wigged effigy speechless behind the glass. Gian Gastone, a dribbling old fop, smirks on the Piazza of the Knights—last of the Medici line. Stucco-faced as the place is, trimmed and shuttered as it is, you would never

suppose it to hide up the hulk of that dreadful tower where Ugolino and his four boys gnawed their fingers until—

Più che il dolor potè il digiuno.

"Hunger did that which grief could never." But there it is, for all that, the skeleton of Pisa's

PIAZZA DEL DUOMO, PISA.

whitewashed cupboard, and Gian Gastone thrusts his lip at it. The rest of his race are with him in line upon the palace front, thick-lipped, narrow-browed, fish-eyed, and dull. Before them all Cosimo the First, a bully, but a man, bestrides a trampling horse. Let him be Cæsar with his foot on Pisa's neck. Pisa was his, for he made it. He founded the Order of the Knights of Saint Stephen, laid out the Piazza

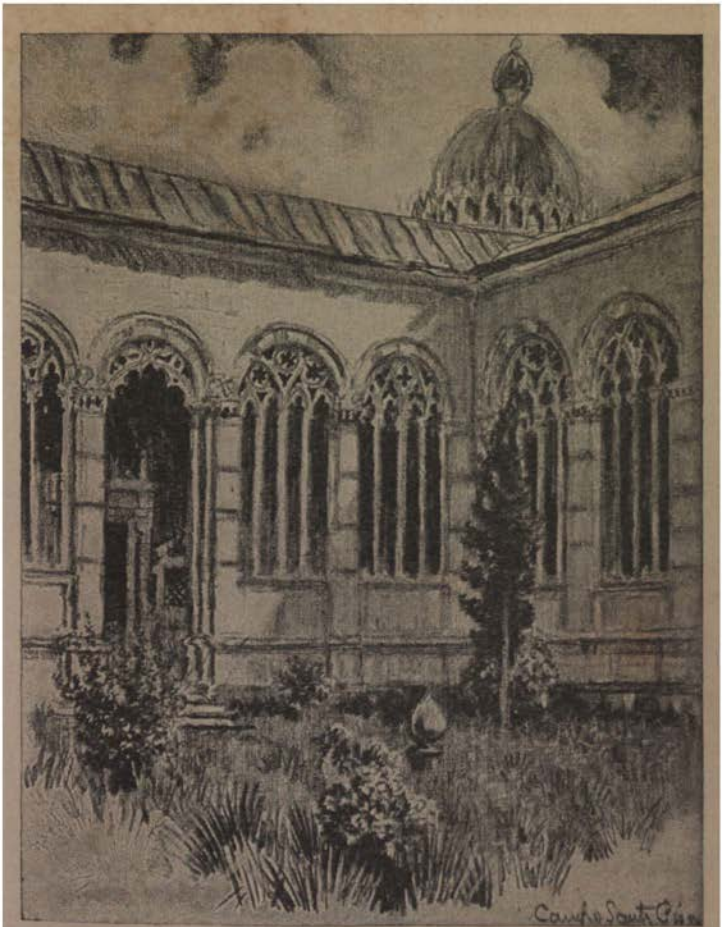
Works of Cosimo Primo.

to do it honour, built a church for its chapter, and had his statue to front it. For what it is, the stately pretence of a tyrant, you could hardly have a finer piazza—spacious and dignified, set about with tall buildings; chivalric, too, as the times understood chivalry. The rest of the town agrees with it so well, one supposes it is owing to the same powerful hand. The main streets are broad,

PISA FROM THE LUCCA ROAD.

and squalor decently veiled. The Lungarno is superb; no rags and tatters dipping into the stream as those of the Borgo at Florence, nothing to obtrude upon the march of the river; and a nobly curving river it is, full and broad, held in by a fine wall and wide carriage-way, and on either side a row of palaces which, if not splendid (as in truth they are not), have a substantial air, and announce their fitness to hold gentlemen.

Two such, of English blood, two of them did contain, as the polite will remember. Byron's,



CAMPO SANTO, PISA.

facing south, is a square brown building dressed with white stone, broad-eaved and shuttered as it

should be, the picture of solid comfort. That is a grace which the noble owner for the time being had neither desired nor deserved.[1] Shelley's house, near the Bridge of the Fortress, close to the bend of the river, is larger, and is very white; that, also, perfectly the "family mansion" of the auctioneer. If he had the whole of it, which I can hardly suppose, he had "ample verge and room enough" to escape from Leigh Hunt, and a garret in which to lock up Godwin. I don't know where Byron kept his pea-fowl. They lived somewhere in the environs, *en pension.*

Reflections upon fishermen.

The Arno here at Pisa has a turbid wave and banks of clay, yet nourishes certain large fish, of which I have eaten, and (to judge by symptoms of the tideway), certain small, never seen by me in net or dish. But up river and down, on either bank do squat Pisans, working seines or rods, to every man his umbrella as a screen from sun or rain. I suppose they were at it while Ugolino was agonising in the Tower; and that when Neri Capponi was battering the walls with his mangonels, there were peaceful Pisans aligned below the Fortezza watching a bunch of worms on a string. Tuscany is full of such contrasting thoughts, for the sights that provoked them are still here. Below this bridge, over the square houses and the river wall, there looms to this day the bulk of a great fortress and a tower beside it

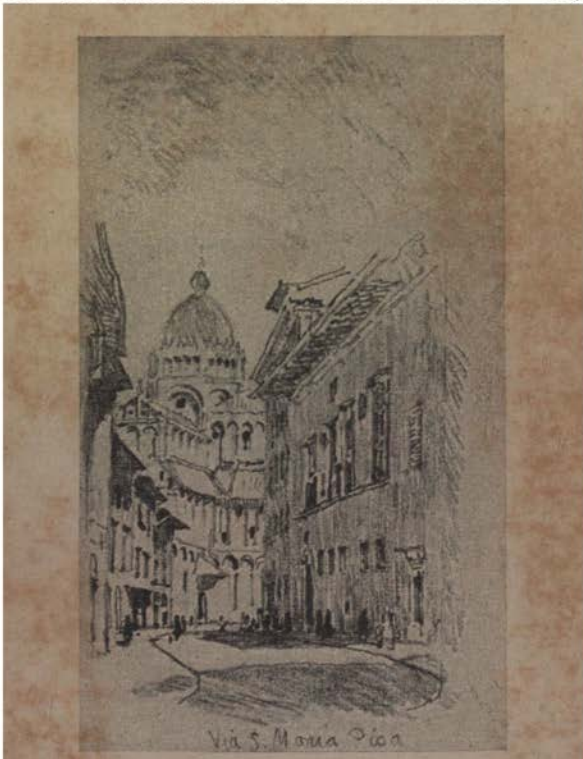
[1] It was the Lanfranchi palace, and had need to be large. Medwin says that Byron came to Pisa with "seven servants, five carriages, nine horses, a monkey, a bull-dog and a mastiff, two cats, three pea-fowl, and some hens." The proprietor of all this gear occupied the first floor, guarded by the bull-dog—which knew Shelley, but refused to be comforted by Medwin.

which looks like a blind giant. Shelley believed it to be the Tower of Famine, but he was wrong.

THE BORGO, PISA.

There is another above bridge, hidden deep in trees. Those two old warriors have seen some wickedness in their days and have helped to do

it. The Pisans crouch underneath them now at their peaceful, fruitless task, and their daughters or sweethearts come and minister to their needs out of handkerchiefs and case-bottles. So, in



VIA S. MARIA, PISA.

many an old fresco, while the Saviour of the world is hanging on His cross, and His friends pity or gaze up in ecstasy from the foot of it, there will be a pink town on a hill in the distance. towered and walled, and belted with a silver river, Mules will lead flour-sacks through the gate, there

will be a boat in mid-stream, a man fishing from the bank. On a terrace over the battlements will sit a lady bleaching her hair—a lover and a poet will be near her, one expressing (from a scroll) the sentiments of the other. Some one will say,

PISA.

an instance, here, of the ideality of Italian art! But not a bit of it. The man has given you what he saw every day. His city was at war, the enemy at the gate. There would be burnings, pillagings, ravishings, and such like; somebody would be getting hanged on a gibbet. All day the bells would be swinging, all night the

beacons would flare. God would go to His grave in order that men might one day stir out of theirs. But still the mules would creep up the hill, women hear tales of love, and men go a-fishing.

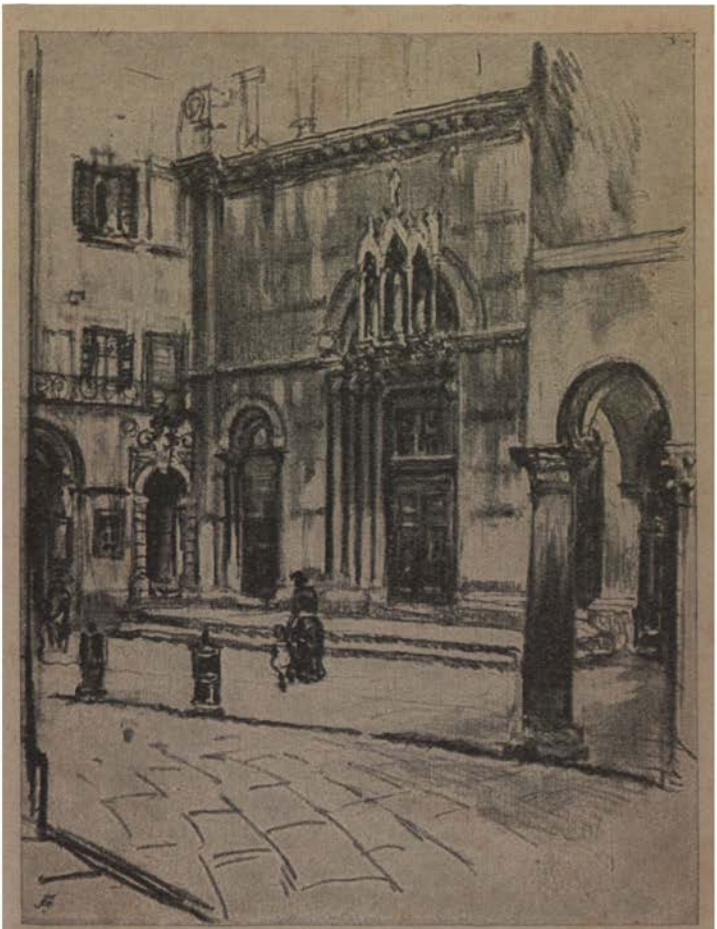
A good inn.

Nor would you ever guess, to see the Pisans go about their business, that they are the descendants of a race enslaved, though Shelley guessed it, or thought he did,

> Amid the desolation of a city
> Which was the cradle and is now the grave
> Of an extinguished people. . .

There is no desolation nowadays: the place has a very Spanish air to me with its tall, inscrutable houses and empty streets. There is a good inn up a dark lane—La Cervia its name—kept by a stately widow, and kept in good order. To hear her rate the maids, to see the waiters fly, is to be assisting at a comedy of Goldoni's. "Padrona, si," "Padrona, no," is all they dare say to her. I came upon her one morning cheapening a fish. It was a vast fish, and a good (as I can testify, who ate of it afterwards); the proud taker of it knew its merits and was voluble upon them. The Padrona listened without changing a muscle; she heard every word, but never moved a hair. At the end, still looking at the fish, she asked, "Quanto domandi?" The man smiled wistfully, shrugged, and murmured some supposed price. She heard him, though I did not; her bosom laboured with a tumult and was delivered of a sigh. She lifted the gill of the fish with a contemptuous finger, and—"Pah!" says she, and lets it down again with a splash. After that she condescended to name her own price, which was immediately

accepted. She asked me at dinner, did I not think it an admirable fish? And as fresh as fresh!



PISA.

Muddy or not, and fishy as it is fished, the Arno here is a noble stream, running full-flooded to the sea. The Pisans made more of it than

the Florentines ever could; for not only did they trade upon it, sending out their argosies east and west, but they took their pleasure there, nobly as befits. Noble is the word for the river, and it should be recorded for the field of a very noble game played yearly upon it to within time of living memory. They called it the *Giuoco del Ponte*, the Bridge Game. I found a room in the museum devoted to its relics —flags, targes, suits of padded leather, challenges on satin, acceptances full of flourish, sonnets of victory, sonnets of defiance, hortatory sonnets,

A noble game.

> Chi l' antiche pompe, e 'l fiero Giuoco
> Or mi rammenta . . .

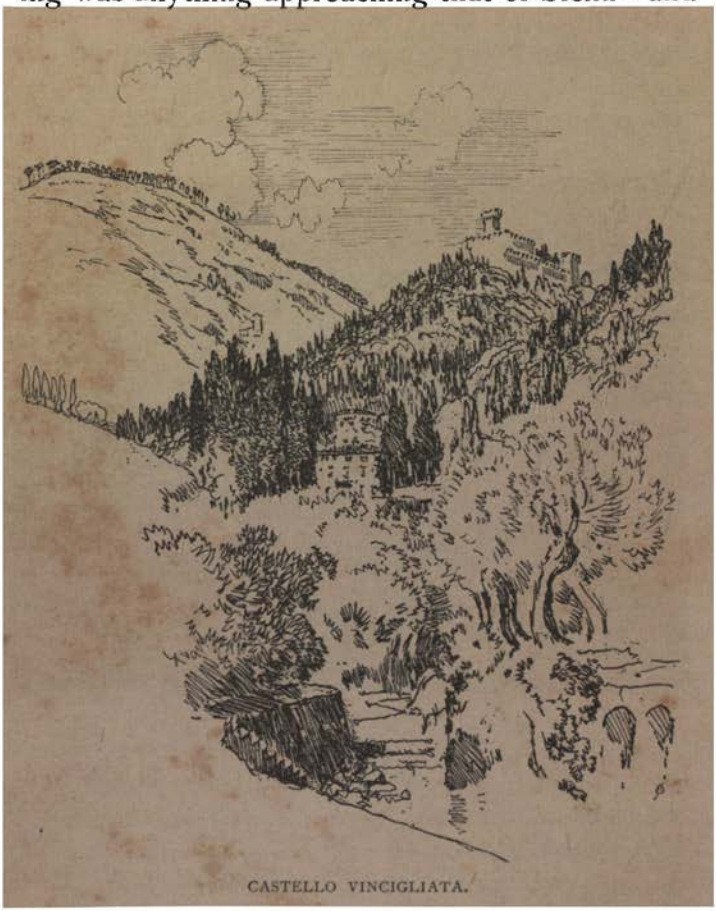
elegies, old prints dedicated to the patron of the year, with that patron's boat in the foreground and himself in tie-wig, his *chapeau de bras* extended in the air, standing to cheer the combatants. Once it was "I nobilissimi Signori, Maria Contessa di Lanesborough e Giacomo King": the English of the eighteenth century were fond of Pisa. Lastly, there is a model of the Ponte di Mezzo, with the parties of either side striving in what used to be called (and was) "mimic warfare"—the phrase seems part of the game. This is how it was played. Mezzogiorno (that is, Pisa south of the Arno) challenged Tramontana, Pisa over the water; or it might be the other way round, according to previous victory. The day and hour appointed, the battles assembled, each on his own side of the river. Amid-bridge were two marshals of the fight with the banners of Pisa. Each *contrada* sent a dozen men, and there were six *contrade* on

either side; twelve dozen men, as I make it, were to contend for the bridge, armed in helmet and breastplate, and a targe—that is, a narrow, pointed shield of wood, fixed on the fore-arm, the sharp end at the elbow, and projecting. It may be conceived from this much that the game was simple: it was as simple as a battle. At gun-fire

PISA.

the opposing sides rushed on to the bridge where the marshals stood. They tried, not to push each other back, but to cross; after an hour the gun sounded again, and every man stood where he was. One of the marshals threw a cord to the other, who drew it taut. That side won which had the more men in the enemy's half bridge. This was the game at its simplest; no doubt it was complicated by local hatreds, by

hot blood, vainglory, and the presence of sweethearts upon the housetops. If the *contrada* feeling was anything approaching that of Siena—and



CASTELLO VINCIGLIATA.

there is no reason to suppose the Pisans less Tuscan than most—the havoc must have been tremendous, and many a man mortally hurt by a thrust of the *targa*. In the old prints they show

you boats herded under the bridge to save the *giuocatori*, who are tumbling into the river like frogs from a rushy bank. It seems that if the enemy saved you from the water you were a prisoner; for at either bridge end there are pounds, ticketed *Prigionieri*. The tall houses on each side of Arno are filled with spectators; ladies and their cavaliers are at the windows, chambermaids and theirs on the roof, foot-boys cling to the chimney-pots. The nobility are in barges on the flood, with their banners trailing behind, dipt in the water. I observed my Lady Lanesborough's lozenge thus employed: her ladyship and the Honourable Mr. King in the stern of the vessel were applauding. Mr. King waved his hat with the air of the Marquis of Granby at Minden. There is not the least suggestion of the proud, passionate old Pisa of great days. The wigs and plaster of the eighteenth century are everywhere; the Lorrainers have accomplished what the Medici began; Pisa is transmogrified.

CHAPTER XVI

INTO THE SOUTHERN HILLS: PISA TO CERTALDO

ERA, Elsa, Ema, Evola, and Pesa are the five sister rivers which flow from the mountains of Volterra into Arno, between Prato-magno and the sea. Their names are symphonies, and so are they: green water, grey banks, and yellow sands form the whole chord of the upland colour. Any one of their valleys will afford you harmonious escape from a plain whose opulence is cloying. You do not come to Tuscany to soak in sap-green. Choose, then, which valley to ascend: from Pontedera you may follow the Era through bald downs to Volterra, or by Evola take a rougher road by Montopoli to the great shoulder of Monte Maggio, which hides San Gimignano from her windy neighbour. My own choice was for neither of these—though by either I should have escaped the sooner—but for Elsa. I would endure the high road even unto Empoli, see the Arno's long reach there; then, having climbed the height of San Miniato, whose tall tower can be observed twenty miles away, follow that gentlest sister of the five—slow-winding Elsa—to Boccaccio's town

The choice of roads.

on the hill; thence by long circuits I should win San Gimignano. So I kept the hither side of Chianti, and missed San Casciano in the Val di Pesa, and Lorenzo's mountain torrent, the Ombrone, which (after his manner) he turned into a nymph, and doted on—in *ottava rima*, perfectly melodious and as empty as a bladder. One must miss something in a country where

TORRE DELLA FAME, PISA.

every turn of the road brings you to a jut of rock, and every rock has bred a nation.

Let me count the gains rather than the losses of that fine spring morning. After the drab outskirts of Pisa, the Maremma and the dyked road, I gained Cascina, a walled arcaded town at the limit of the Vico Pisano, grey within a red husk of walls, inexhaustibly picturesque; then came Pontedera, walled again—and with each a thrill. That is

Cascina, Pontedera, walled towns.

a thing you may count upon—that flutter of expectancy and its full reward—whenever you approach a walled town by road. By road, observe, but not otherwise. Seen thus, the wall must be negotiated; you must pass through the gates with other wayfarers. A walled city is like a veiled bride. What is one about to embrace? There are no gradations, no straggling line of suburbs to water down the type before you reach the heart. The truth is flashed upon you plump and plain. You leave the fields, you clear the gates—here is Cascina, here Pontedera for good or ill. To them, through them and beyond, an inexorable white road runs as straight as a ruled line towards Florence, and (sure sign of Florentine dominion) the cypresses begin to lift their heads, in groves by the wayside, sable as night, or sparsely in the fields, one sooty flame striking up in a hedgerow:—

Quantum lenta solent inter viburna cupressi—

the Mantuan's image for a very Mantuan landscape. It was a Sunday in late April when I saw all these lazy riches; the sun and the larks in the sky seemed the only active things. The men were in the wineshops and the women in church—or most of them. But some frowsy, dark-browed girls craned from upper windows in Pontedera to see us clatter through; some heavy young men were asleep on benches by the tavern door; some dogs were catching at flies as they drowsed. All's one to Pontedera whether Pisa or Florence be lord! Yet this is a road of memories; armies have trampled it. There's not a crumbling wall

between the two cities that has not been wetted with blood.

Immediately after Pontedera a low spur of hill starts up from the level, runs the north parallel of your road for a league or so, and bears a crown. You cannot fail to notice Santa Maria-in-Monte, pink and white upon a boss of sage-green, with her white belfry gleaming in the sun.

Rotta, Santa Maria-in-Monte; a pious observance.

THE ARNO AT PISA.

It lies across the water; just before you, east by south, you have Rotta-upon-Arno, a ruddy-brown village with a square tower, where they make bricks out of Arno mud. The river makes a deep bend to kiss Rotta's dusky cheek; and a pretty country thing she is, though she looks across the flood to a prettier, her pale sister on a green throne—which we should call Saint Mary-at-Hill. How many towns go partners in the mercies of Arno! Lastra and Signa, Montelupo

and Capraja—and now these two. And so it is that the fairer is ever the more remote. Here Rotta plays the saucy romp of the highway, the fancy of any *fattore* in a two-wheeled cart. Modesty abides, I gather, behind the green lattices of St. Mary's. Yet admire at Rotta the lonely stretches of the river above it and below; placid breaths of water scarcely streaked by a dabchick—a triangle sail, may be, beating up—rows of service poplars, silver grey—golden water meadows behind them—a peaceful, smiling, Sunday country. By a bridge over the Ciecina brook you will see Montopoli above the valley of Evola, a long hill town very boldly fired by the sun, with a red tower predominant—tattered ensign of her ancient state. There is a more comfortable sight near at hand—a trick they have, when pence fail, of making bowers for the Madonna of clipped yews. The hedgerows here are of yew more often than not. Within any length of it you may see her darkling, like a bird on a nest of eggs, and always a bunch of wild flowers before her, fresh from the wayside. Once, indeed, and just hereabouts, I found her caged in an old egg-box, and that perched in the hedge. An egg-box, I do assure you, with a wreath of buttercups and daisies all about it. I don't mind confessing that I was moved—as who would not be? How our country prospers, nourishes the virtues, tells the truth, spends its happy ease, without the Madonna to smile approval, to admonish or to counsel, I do not in the least understand. Still less how, having once had her for its friend, it could ever have decided to do without her. It is not a racial matter; she

is by no means a Latin goddess; you will see her in Germany, Belgium, Russia, Ireland, Greece. The people of all these countries adore her openly, but we are too shamefaced, it seems. A tale of love will always send some tongue into some cheek. We do not choose to own that we love our mothers; and if one of us love God he had better not say so. Therefore we deny ourselves this pretty bosom-friendship, choke up this ever-running fount of emotion, and ask our boys and girls to love Virtue. Lord help us! It is very well to extenuate an egg-box shrine, and to exhibit it as the sorry remnant of that burning faith which built Florence a dawn-coloured church, and made Lucca della Robbia's descendants marquesses. The only answer is, that, to be sure, it is no greater thing than the two mites in the treasury, but yet one may be as glad of one as of the other. For one person who can serve God in spirit and in truth there should be a thousand who can do it only in egg-boxes and buttercups. And so sure as a woman sets a pious picture in an egg-box and puts a nosegay in front of it, she is a lover, I'll trouble you, and therefore she is blessed.

San Miniato de' Tedeschi.

As the land closes in upon the river the country grows fantastically fair. An amphitheatre of abrupt monticules reveals itself, on each a towered town, a castle a heap of monastery building, or a gleaming white villa, cypress-haunted; but the highest is always that which carries San Miniato-of-the-Germans, a city impossible to be hid. I turned aside from the Empoli road to see it for

the sake of Pier delle Vigne, a pleasant poet and much-injured statesman. Nor did I repent, though I suppose my horses did, for it stands upon a rock, the highest of a series of three, round each of which we had to creep afoot. Cypresses led us the way, and heavy-booted peasants, trudging home from the fields in companies, the women singing like wood-birds at dusk, the men apart. The town has a castellated keep and gatehouse,

SAN MINIATO.

a little octagonal church, a little round church, an ugly collegiate church, and on the summit of its final rock, higher than the highest belfry, the great shaft, cleft in the midst, which is the terrific menace of all the valleys about. That was where the Suabian Emperors had their high seat and bed of justice. There judged, there sonneteered, and there pined Pier delle Vigne, from whom Dante, brushing by him in the hell-wood of suicides, tore a gnarly limb. According to his own account,

he was a faithful servant of Cæsar's, but he used a privilege for which a man must pay dear:

> I am that one who held both keys
> Of Frederick's heart, which I dispensed,
> Opening and shutting with such ease,
> There was no man but found it fenced.

Envy, he says:

> Envy the whore, who from the gates
> Of Cæsar never takes her eyes—

envy, the disease in the bones of princes, undid him. The story says that in this tower they blinded him by means of the red-hot basin,[1] and that from this very rock, as he was being led to his death at Pisa, he dashed himself headlong:

> My spirit, driven by scornful gust
> To ease in death the sting of scorn,
> To my just self made me unjust.

Milton never wrung stronger juices from common words. But if we fail to understand why Cato was to be at large in Purgatory while Pier grew writhen in Hell—seeing each had preferred death to his dishonour—it may be because great Rome seems to us greater without such accommodations. Let Cato stand with his own, say we. But Dante thought not.

Pier is a ghost for whom the great tower stands spokesman; others there were who now have no witness in this little old town. Whitewash covers all the blood-stains made by Mangiadori rending Malpigli, or Malpigli stabbing Mangiadori in the dark. They

Pleasant things in San Miniato.

[1] This torment has a verb of its own: *bacinare*, to wit. The atrocity must have been as common as boycotting.

have put up a monument to Garibaldi where you would have looked to see one to the *Stupor Mundi.* The church, which must have heard those rascals sing *O Salutaris Hostia,* is bare of any sign that so it did. It stands in a little empty piazza, which it graces with a tondo of the Della Robbia, no more out of place and no less fragrant than a flower in a wall—being, indeed, the same sort of artless accident of the sun's to all appearance, and as different from its brethren as one flower differs from another. A stooping Madonna, deeply curtseying with crossed arms, an angel frizzed like a *signorino,* God the Father with His meinie of cherubim approving from the sky. Good title-deeds for a *marchese* the like of these! Beyond that, the church reveals frescoes and mild Tuscan altar-pieces—thin, happy things—and a wise old priest teaching the Catechism to a score of children, doing the best he could for the reputation of San Giuseppe. There is a scouring drive to be done—circle after circle of road at an angle of forty-five—before you recover the plain of Empoli. A fat Samminiatese passed me on this declivity, swaying in his tax-cart as his horse galloped down with a loose rein. Good, easy man, he had his spectacles on his nose and read the *Corriere della Sera.* Neither the terrors of the steep nor the purple and grey stretches of the great valley, half revealed in the gathering dusk, had any interest for him.

Empoli in the plain.

Empoli seemed a hiving, unaired place after that empty mountain town. Its one long street was thronged with Sunday passengers, and every window had its elbow-cushion, and pair, or two pair, of shoulders thrust

but. There you have a pastime of which the Tuscan woman never tires. When she has passed the age of being looked at, she will look—from a window. Men go to the café: the woman's café is the street, and the window-sill her little table. As for the promenade, it is a solemn ritual in which the following points are observed.

EMPOLI.

The girls walk together in mid street, the young men on either side of them. The girls go one way, the young men meet them going the other; meet and pass; but there are no recognitions, greetings, salutations, sidelong looks. Conversation is in undertones, no one laughs, and no one stops walking. You never saw such a mummery, so devoutly done. A few steps aside there is a piazza set with trees, a public garden well kept—

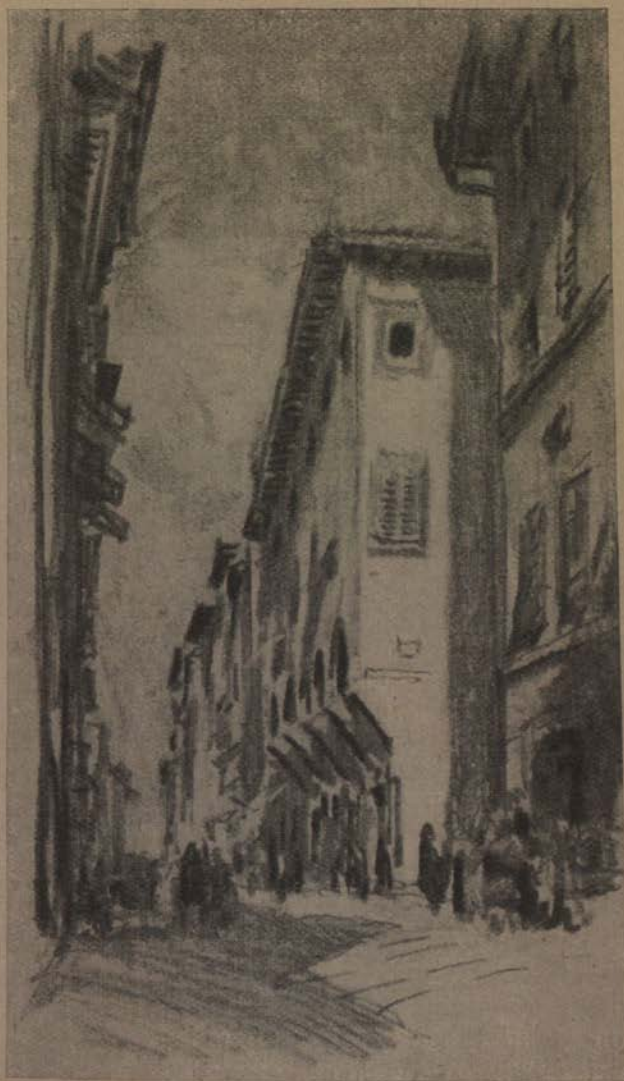
and empty. Beyond that, again, you find a bridge over a long reach of river, an embanked way, a parapet upon which not to sit is an absurdity. No one sits there. Yet there are fishermen to be seen setting their lines aslant the flood, singing plaintive songs as they work; there are the skew-sails of barges urging slowly home in the twilight —all the romantic riverine business is here. But no! The drift of fashion has left this spacious theatre bare; the Empolitani shuffle in procession up and down that very street where they are slaves every day of the week; and Nunziata, who will trundle a mop here to-morrow, must be unknown to Olinto, to whom to-morrow she may laugh her "Buon dì." Such are the Sunday diversions of a town which once held the fate of Florence within its walls. For it was in this very Empoli that they held a council—

> After the havoc and the rout
> Which tinctured gules the Arbia's wave;

and here Farinata degli Uberti, exiled Florentine though he was, "with his face gravely perturbed," says Villani, up and spoke his piece in her defence:

> Alone I was, there in that place
> Where every will saw Florence razed,
> I on her side with open face.

This is the account he makes of it to Dante; and it seems to have been true. He shook his fist at Provenzano Salvani, the great Sienese captain, whose mind was that Florence should be laid level with the ground, and whose elequence had nearly moved the council to agree with him. "If that



EMPOLI

beast," says Farinata—and one can read the scorn of one city for the other trembling in his deep tones—"If that beast tread not out the fire he has kindled, I will build him a cage whence he will never get loose; and such a bonfire will I heap round about it that he will never live to quench it." No doubt he meant what he said, and no doubt was able to have performed it. The upshot was that they made a peace at Castelfiorentino in Val d' Elsa, which lasted just as long as such pacts usually did: to be exact, not six years. Benevento followed at just that interval of time, Tagliacozzo two years later. Farinata, who had enabled Florence to win those two battles and so recover what she had lost, was (as a consequence) further from her than he had ever been. *Tantaene animis!* So great a race and such little wars! I think one must be strongly enamoured of the drums and trumpets of history to care for such toy symphonies.

The Val d' Elsa: Castelfiorentino.

To those who love Wordsworth's "pastoral melancholy," and in low grey hills and willows about a sluggish grey brook can reap their quiet harvest, the long road by Elsa, from Empoli to Boccaccio's town, will need no enhancing. To bolder spirits it will be redeemed by the sense of adventure which never fails the traveller when, by how slow degrees soever, he leaves the plain—and by two sights justificatory. Castelnuovo huddled on a cliff exactly big enough to hold it, is one, and the other is Capanaiolo with a tall Pucci villa. Hereabouts, also, let me tell the humorous, they lead pigs by a string and collar round the neck—and do no better.

Of Castelfiorentino, a precipitous town full of children, dust, and flies, there is nothing so comfortable to say. It is well-looking from without, but within cavernous and starved—like Dante's wolf—

Che di tutte brame
Sembiava carca nella sua magrezza.[1]

I think the people must have been veritably

THE PIAZZA, EMPOLI.

famished, for they crowded about us like desperate cats—hollow-eyed, patient, asking faces they had. This unspeakable endurance of the Tuscan poor—is there anything like it in the world? The sight of us to their fevered eyes—smug, sleek, broad-clothed foreigners that we were—would have egged Lancashire on to murder and Paris to ghoul's work. These people looked their hunger,

[1] Whose gaunt ribs looked
A cage for all the lusts.

said nothing, and bore no grudges. Theirs is one of those cases where a lower town has gathered about the highway and the rails, and left the old stronghold to itself. The Castello, the Podestà, the Cathedral, the wonder-working Madonna, the old apparatus of township, are derelict on the hill, where once upon a day they were all to all. There must be a dozen churches—all as dead as King Pandion—in that dead town. Shops with nothing to sell, and old women who lack the means of buying, are to be seen there, and faded children languidly playing in the gutter. They are querulous, too, like little convalescents after fever. But there are palaces in the streets, and the fortress-houses of an older generation, and frescoes dropping flake by flake, and grease on dumb altars a hundred years cold. It is ill-work dying on a hill-top; but to live there if you can must be good. You come to a tougher stock than Castelfiorentino, with much hardy green wood in it still, if you are patient of a few more miles of dull road. A turn in this, round the shoulder of a brae, reveals a bluff of sandstone rock, a headland thrust far out into the valley; upon it stands a ruddy town, with heavy old red towers, three or four. You will find a hale growth up there—or certainly I did. That is Certaldo, where Master John Boccas, as our betters called him, "a right worthy clerk," was alive and dead on December 21, 1375. Look to the right of it—but far to the right. Among folded hills, blurred by the heat, stand up the shafts of San Gimignano; and so one old town watches another, while you may wonder at two.

You may wonder at three, if you please, though

the third is a spirit. High above Certaldo, on the watershed between Elsa and Pesa, lay—and still lies buried, so they say—the wondrous city of Semifonte: absolutely once there, and now absolutely vanished. The mind storing little of it, the fancy can build at large. Castles in Spain—castles in Semifonte! It may have been Etruscan, Roman, Longobard, Gothic, Frankish—*chi lo sa?* The first strife that ever fell out between Florence and Siena was before its walls. That was an eleventh-century affair, and even then it was said to have been a splendid town. In another two hundred years it was destroyed, and so effectually that not a stone was left behind. This is a fate too extraordinary for any cities save those of the plain; I give it as it is told, but I cannot believe it. Deep under the grass sod Semifonte must be lying, as I picture it, body-perfect, awaiting the resurrection of us all. At that tremendous hour when Charlemagne shall walk forth from the Untersberg, shaking his long sleep from eyes and hair, and Arthur be brought back in his barge of queens from Avilion, the hillside of Petrognano will open her mouth, and we shall see the spires and domes of Semifonte—the gonfalon floating from the towers of the signiory—the cathedral doors open for Mass—all shall be as it was before. What a city to visit! The Rocca, quadrangular citadel "beautiful and inconceivably strong," the Porta Grande of cut stone: the tower of it—Torre del Leone—two hundred and thirty feet high, having a gallery wreathed about it, all of arches upon marble columns, and on the top a grey stone lion of colossal size, who held in his

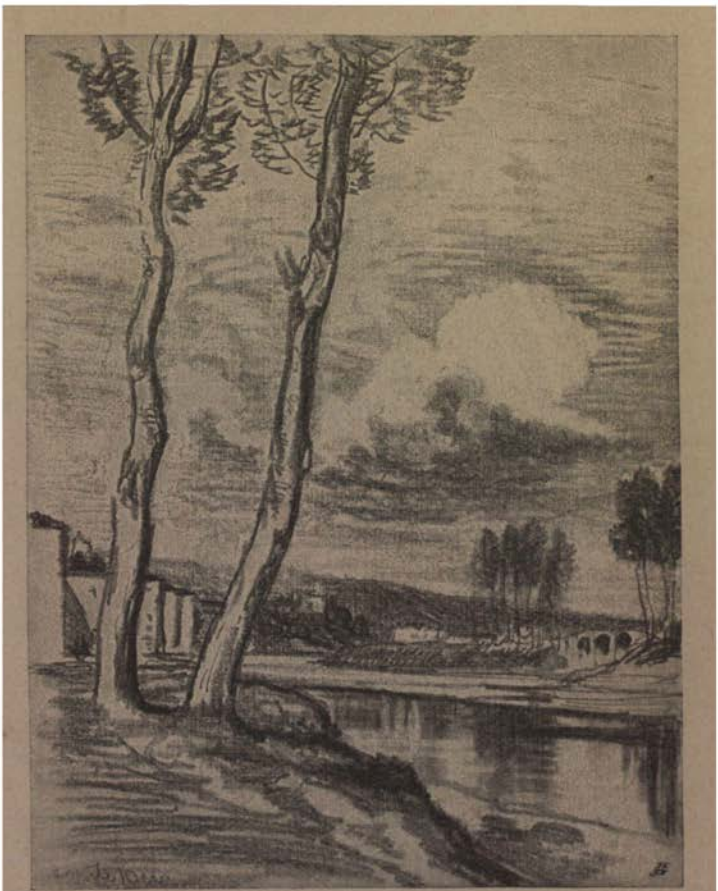
Lost Semifonte.

paws the banner of Semifonte. Here had been sights. There were fountains of abundant water cut and arcaded into the rock, and others which coursed down the streets in marble conduits; there were forty churches, monasteries, palaces of the greater clergy, strongholds of the chiefs; one can conceive the rest. That were a city to visit—which had never known the Medici, nor the neo-classicists, nor sixteenth-century surfeit—Benvenuto Cellini, John of Bologna, Paolo Giovio and all his crew; nor seventeenth-century simulacra—fair white tombs full of putrid bones; nor eighteenth-century pomatum—Metastasio and his fellow-jigsters. Semifonte would arise a perfect whole and clean, from the days of Pisa's great building, and Lucca's—a *revenant* from strong old times, like Ogier the Dane, when men were men before they could hope to be poets, and painters did not take themselves to be prophets, and God and the devil were as near at hand as Emperor and Pope. Cities came and went, and quicklier in Tuscany than elsewhere. "*Se tu riguardi Luni ed Urbisaglia, Come son ite,*" says old Cacciaguida to Dante. The sea left some to wither on dunes, the land swallowed up others inch by inch, but Semifonte went out like the dream of a night. So splendid, and so to vanish! I am content to believe any marvel you may have to tell me of Semifonte.

To return to Certaldo. There is a lower town there, as at Castelfiorentino, and much business done about the railway station; inns also there are, highly favoured by bagmen. Commerce is a snug jade o' these days. For you and me, whose traffic is

Certaldo, Boccaccio's town.

with more impalpable bales, who have "intelletto d' amore" and such like, we can leave our carriage



PONTEDERA.

there, and walk up a stepped path—paved like a mill-race and worn as smooth—to the old town and the citadel. Boccaccio's birth and death-

place, which I saw not without a pulse for his jolly sake, is all red and brown-purple, has a castellated Palace of the People, ragged battlements, barbicans, loggias, belfries—all good old wind-wasted things. His own house, *la di lui casa* as they say (rather, as they write), has a tower, one of the two fine ones left, from the top of which you can see San Gimignano showing off five of her thirteen giants, and the snaky road by which you must presently travel to reach them. Catamount's nest that it is, Certaldo's streets go round about the rock like sentinels' walks, and can never know a cart-wheel. Plodding mules, with tender feet and ears drooping like tassels to the ground, carry up firing and corn-meal and yarn for the looms. Other provand than this the true Certaldesi leave to the bourgeois below, and grow sleek upon their hard-fetched fare. Their women are handsome, as they ought to be, with green eyes, dusky skins, fair, tangled hair. They carry themselves bolt upright like all mountaineers, but with better reason than most, for their figures are remarkable. The men sing gay songs, are happy and free-mannered; and if Boccaccio is not at the bottom of that, the deuce is. If you set these deductions down to my fancy you will be wrong. I saw here what I have never seen elsewhere in all long Italy, a man stop and kiss a girl in open street. No offence either. He was a baker, who came—a floury *amorino*—saw, and considered the bend of her industrious head, and stooped and kissed her as she sat sewing at her door. Her lovers and acquaintances about her saw nothing amiss, nor was she at all put out. After so flagrant an achievement the

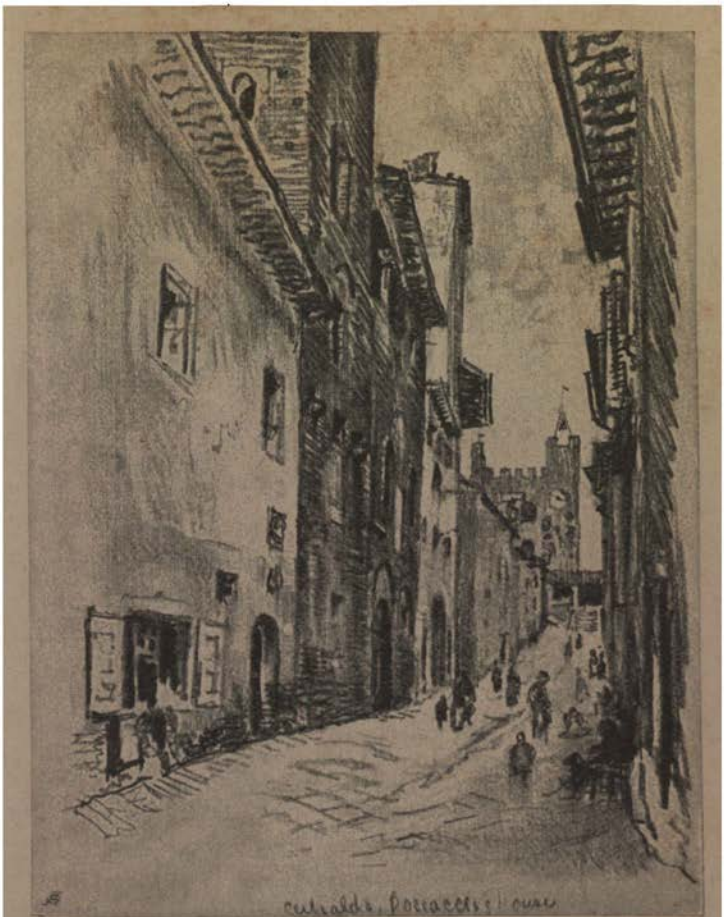
madcap went a whole progress of gallantry down the street, none resenting his freedoms. He danced with one good wife, chucked another's chin, and lifted a third bodily into the air, singing all the while. You see these feats in old prints now and then—in Callot, for instance, though very rarely in Italian prints (never, I believe, in Zocchi)—they are almost inconceivable in real life, yet here seemed fitting enough. It was allowed that the baker was *un po' allegro*, but clearly in this town they hold to the opinion of their great man that "bocca baciata non perde ventura." There is nothing to be seen in Boccaccio's house but what is outside it, so to say; the great open view of the downs, the incidents of the cheerful street. It is quite otherwise with the Palazzo del Commune, a Gothic structure in red brick and stone facings, of the Sienese type. The Custode's wife is very proud of her charge. She exhibits in the court a whole nosegay of painted shields. Here are Ridolfi, Capponi, Pucci of Florence—bygone Podestàs; here are Guinigi of Lucca, Visconti of Milan, Tolomei, Piccolomini, Salimbeni of Siena. "All this fine blazonry," says she, "points to a time when Certaldo was a great city, like Siena"; and here is one of many cases where a place, always dependent upon Florence, has been inviolably attached to the southern city by the heart-strings. The remains of fresco, too, in church and chapel and hall, point to the same thing. Grave, full-throated Sienese Madonnas, blue cloaks over their brocades, preside at assemblies of doctors, seraphic and militant. Saint Catherine with her pinched and faithful face is much here. San Michele in Roman greaves and

breastplate, the languorous works of Sodoma and his tribe—all crumbling, and all the better, I think; but all tending to Siena. One has left the Florentine dominion; one has come in to the south. Florence governed all the south, but Siena reigned.

From across a weir in Elsa you can see how boldly Certaldo heaps itself up, and how its house-walls, continuing the planes of the rock, make curtains of defence against escalade. As I watched it, eating my bread and white cheese in the flecked shade of poplars, there seemed a glow upon the place which proceeded from within. It was warm red, warm grey, warm yellow. Lichen covers the brickwork closely, and, like the gold-leaf which the old gilders used to lay upon red, is all the richer for the undertinge. This is where a road turns off to San Gimignano from the trunk which runs on to Colle and Siena—a delectable junction of shade and tumbling water made for the sweet uses of luncheon. By this very bend Boccaccio may have sat, and watched (as I did) the brown boys dip their legs in water and scream to each other as the trout leaped the weir. If he came when I did he would have exulted no less in the spring finery and chorus of nightingales, and have had more excuse than he seems to have sought for the opinion—which has been combated since his time—that this world is a garden. To what other end than man's solace and delight does this green water flow? Why, otherwise, is there a nightingale in every bright bush? Easy, hopeful, secure philosopher! Here at any rate, it is good to be, eating bread and cheese, drinking red wine,

A weir in Elsa.

taking breath for a larger air. We may pour libation here, and cry unto the amorous gods of



CERTALDO, BOCCACCIO'S HOUSE.

Siena; for we are in their country by this, and have left the plodders of the Arno behind us.

Henceforward our commerce must be in windier streets, and all the water we find will spring from the heart of rocks. We are in the way of Fontebranda and the Aqua Diana, with five steep miles before us to San Gimignano.

CHAPTER XVII

THE GHOSTS OF SAN GIMIGNANO

THE white mud which boils in the Bulicame of Viterbo, and served the loose women there for lustral water in Dante's day, is churned in the hills of Volterra, a few miles west of San Gimignano. A pilgrimage thither will take you into places whose desolation freezes the very office of the sun; travelling that road you will discover how this town of towers is built upon a green tongue of land pushed out into the drab Maremma. The dark bulk of a hill, the *Poggio Commune*, is the tongue's point, from which you can see at once the towers of San Gimignano, and Volterra keeping watch and ward over her grey leagues. The frontier-fortress of these ancient enemies, Castel San Gimignano, is on the further side of that hill. Better wine is not trodden in Tuscan vats than the clean red liquor you may buy there.[1] But it is grown in the Chianti, and not where they crush the grapes; all the fruitful land

The lie of the land.

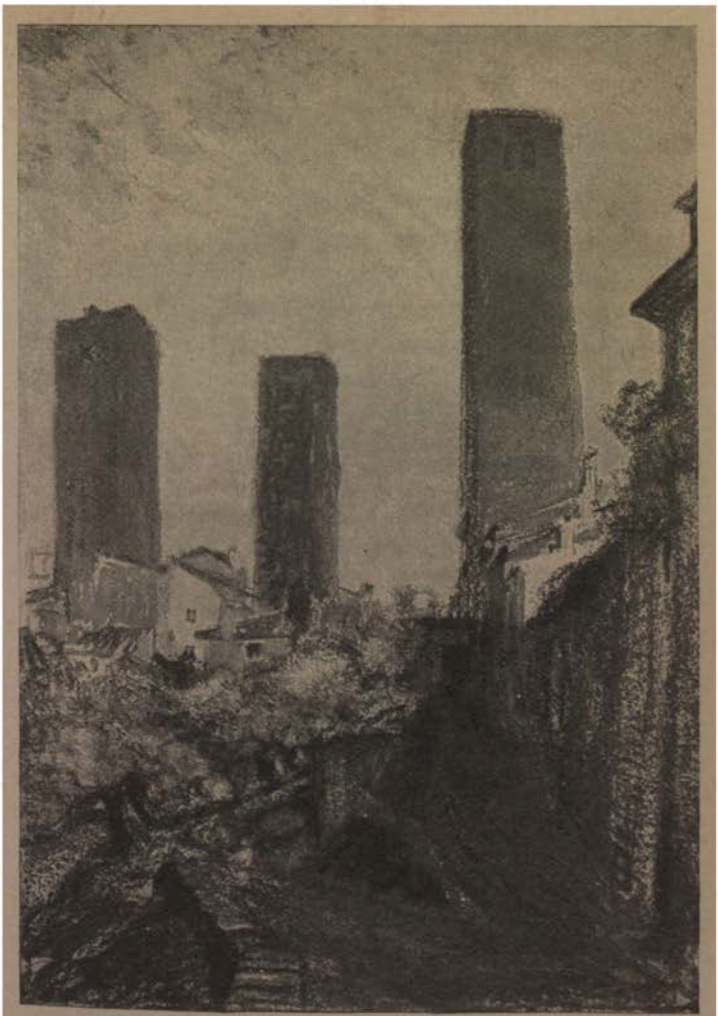
[1] It was famous in the 16th century. "Di quindi," says Leandro Alberti, "si traggono buone Vernace da annoverare fra i nobili vini d' Italia." *Descrittione d' Italia.* Venice, 1588, p. 51.

lies to the east. Of this you may be assured by a dawn watch. Make your orisons early, rise before the sun, open your window and lean head and breast out into the shadowless, grey calm. Like great crested waves heaving to a shore, see the landscape tend towards the barrier hills. You are looking into the heart of Tuscany, if you are looking east. Elsa is below you, with woody sides, and Poggibonsi upon a little mound just across Elsa; the first wave-crest is the hither ridge of Chianti, then comes Radda in violet distance, then the further Chianti, a blue-black bar. Over that, but hidden, are Arno, running north for a space, Arezzo, and the Apennines. But between you and the first Chianti chain the land is hollowed out like a cup, which you may see on misty mornings filled to the brim with fleecy white. It breaks like surf against the bar; it has drowned Elsa and her little towns, Certaldo, Poggibonsi, Barberino, and the rest of them. Wait, however, and watch. To see the sun burn the top of the ridge, come glowing up behind it, and strike the cloud-sea with a broad path of glory, is one of the sights of this place of faëry. It fits you for your day to come, and is the apocalypse of your night of mysteries. For San Gimignano is a spell-bound place; ghosts are about it by day, and the night is full of their voices.

The truth and the seeming.

I know of none whose outside show is more of a mask to its inside truth. Seen fairly from the long file of cypresses, which signifies your near approach to the Porta San Matteo, it looks to be of imposing ugliness, with a mountainous grandeur all its own. You think of storied heaps of ruin, derelict Baalbec, or

Persepolis of gaunt propylons—"courts where

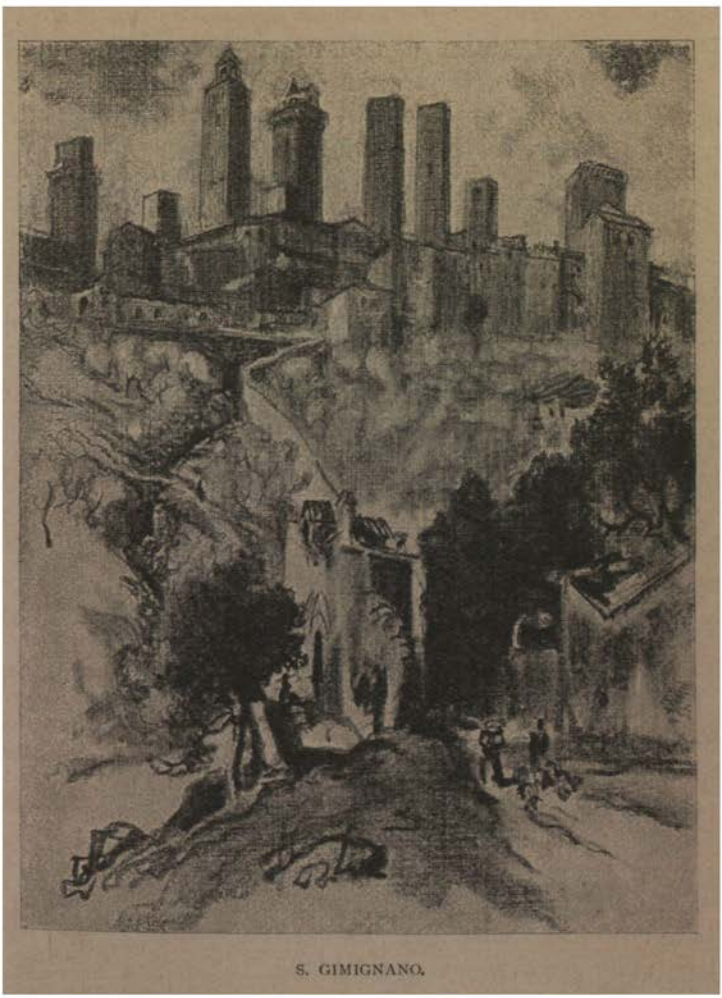


SAN GIMIGNANO.

Jamshid gloried and drank deep." Blind towers,

windowless houses, blank walls, present an inscrutable front: you think, a town cut in blocks, like something of the East, where men build against the sun. To enter the gate is to trust oneself to the uncouth companionship of giants. But not at all: the moment you are within you discover the truth. It is all gigantic still, but not monstrous, not humiliating; solemn and wonderful, rather, and silent, a place where beautiful pale people tread softly and never lift their voices, and dream-children, frail as breath and coloured as faintly as wood-flowers, come and stand about you, full of secret knowledge which they are forbidden to impart. The contrast is extreme; an abode fashioned by Titans for themselves, inhabited now by a people for whom the loggias and belvederes of Gozzoli's frescoes, all the delicate windless days of his fancy, would be the proper setting. The whole town is so much of a piece. You can well imagine it to have been hacked out of the solid by huge contrivers, a fortress dug from the live rock; the towers and square barbicans and double walls pared down to that semblance; open spaces cleared by force of the pick; and about these the streets drilled into busy tracery of tunnels, galleries, archways, stepways. From the piazza three such tunnels run steeply down into the dark; high on a broad stair a church-front stands sharply out; but above that you may see five, seven, eight monster towers, blank cubes of masonry, afforesting the sky. There is no ornament, no colour, no gradation between the white and the black. All is, in fact, one weathered silver or one hollow of dark, and all of one age. It sounds grimly, so

described, yet it is anything but that. A friendly and gentle race inhabits it, but with so alien an



S. GIMIGNANO.

air that you are apt to think them settlers in a deserted city, who have never ceased to be cowed

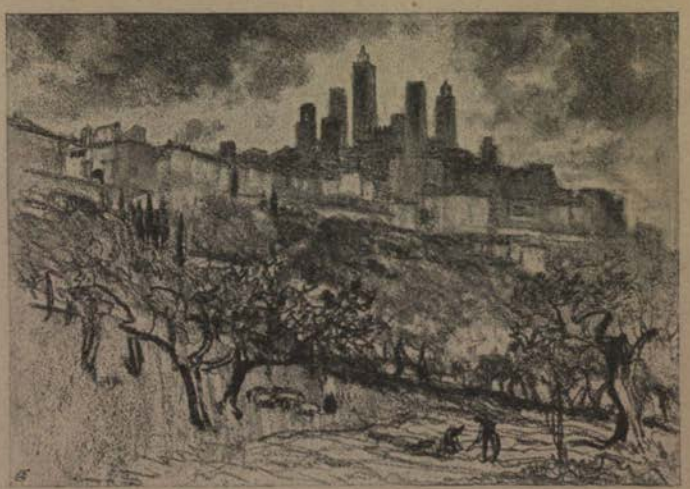
by their enormous lodging. They are many sizes too small, and (as I read the books) so they have ever been. You will be wrong to think them the product of isolation and hunger, and their fragility a mountain anæmia. The history of San Gimignano is all pathetic, all a faltered treble in the minor. Their gallantries—for they were gallant—move tears rather than heart-beats. Their heroes can only be seen through a mist of unavailing pity, and nowadays mournful birds sing their elegy. For they are famous, not for what they did, but for what they suffered. Their hierarch is Santa Fina, a precocious little macerating baggage of thirteen, pretty to death, as they say, who found a kind of still ecstasy rotting on a plank. Sienese by instinct, predilection, and the lie of the land, they fell a-quarrelling with Volterra in early days, and bickered ineffectually for a hundred and fifty years. The natural result flowed beautifully true. In mid-fourteenth century Florence assumed the lordship and never let go.

There is very little chivalry in all this; nothing of a kind, for instance, which would have inspired that most chivalrous poet, Messer Folgore of this place. He chose rather for Siena, the home of Tuscan chivalry, and the Spendereccia house, with its quaint gospel of clothes and frittering. It was to the "brigata nobile e cortese," which he found there, that he dedicated his high-bred, thin rhymes; to young men with such ruffling names as

Painted chivalry and the facts.

> Tingoccio, Atuin di Togno, ed Ancajano,
> Bartolo, e Mugaio, e Fainotto.

He thought them, or said that he did, like Lancelot and the sons of King Ban of Benwick; but what is curious is that his feudal verses find feudal illustration upon the walls of the Communal Palace here. There is a broad sheet of fresco, blue and gold, in this place, very much in the Sienese manner; but it was another hand which commented upon Folgore, an earlier hand, with



S. GIMIGNANO.

an extraordinarily Norman touch. This shows you a great chase in the doing, running dogs after a boar, huntsmen with spears and horns, a wooded mountain landscape, with white harts flying through the trees. On the adjoining wall an Ardinghelli, fat-jowled, shaven tyrant—Scolaio, of that stock, Archbishop of Tyre—stiff as William on the linen of Bayeux, receives tribute of the game. Men lead dogs in leash; there are

hooded hawks; near by a page holds his stallion by the bridle. Then a tournament. Knights in chain mail and surcoats of silk run a course with spears, then fight the sword-bout afoot:

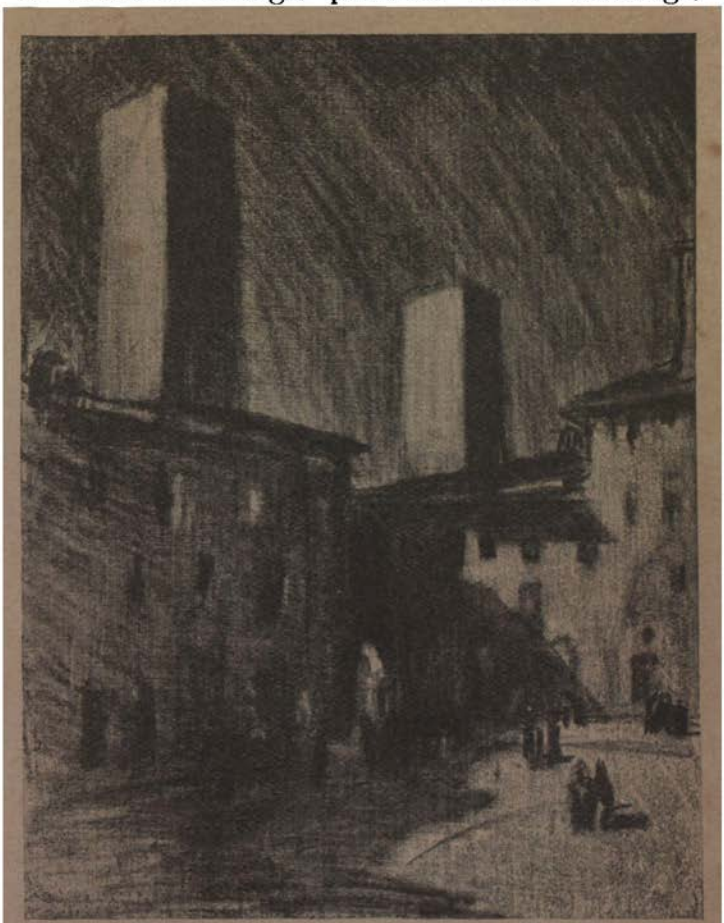
> Prodi e cortesi più che Lancilotto,
> Se bisognasse con le lance in mano,
> Fariano torneamenti a Cambelotto.

So sings Folgore, dazzled by the bravery of his spendthrifts; but the Camelot of his fancy and election was Siena, and the lists the flags of the Campo. Nor is prowess a word for the Ardinghelli either; so stoutly depicted here, they live in history as victims rather than heroes.

The Ardinghelli brethren.

They—of Norman origin as I suppose—and the Salvucci did the fighting, which no Tuscan city ever failed of, or failed to pay for in the long run. Their towers are standing, a couple to each name, but their houses are gone. Cheek by jowl they reared up in the Piazza and sustained vendetta for two centuries. Then a deed was done—it was in 1352, just before the Florentine occupation—which drowned their puny hatreds in innocent blood. Benedetto Strozzi, a Florentine, was Podestà, who, upon unjust suspicion, fostered (as the suspects believed), by whisperings of the Salvucci, seized by night and imprisoned two brethren of the Ardinghelli. Primeranno and Rossellino were their flowery names; one may suspect them of beauty. On this account or another, but probably on this (for the Tuscans always suffered handsome tyrants gladly, and the standard of beauty was not high), the two lads had lovers in the town, to one of whom one of them threw a letter from the window

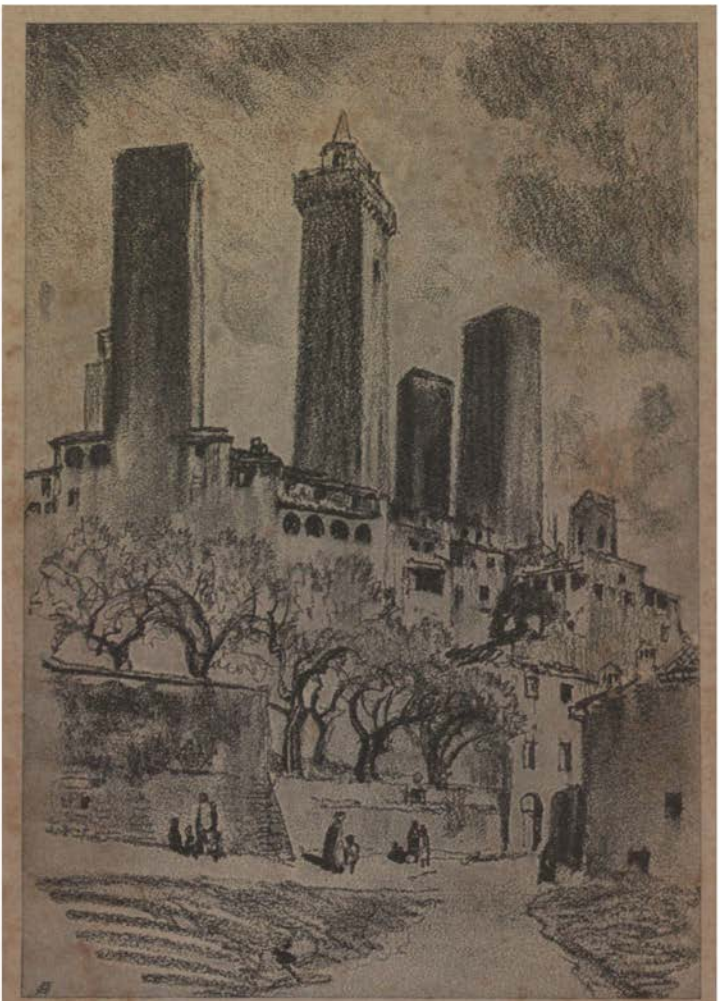
of his prison. Word was then sent to Florence of Strozzi's doings, petitions went, warnings,



S. GIMIGNANO.

entreaties, which had their effect. The priors were unwilling to risk extremities, knowing, perhaps, their Strozzi. At any rate they sent

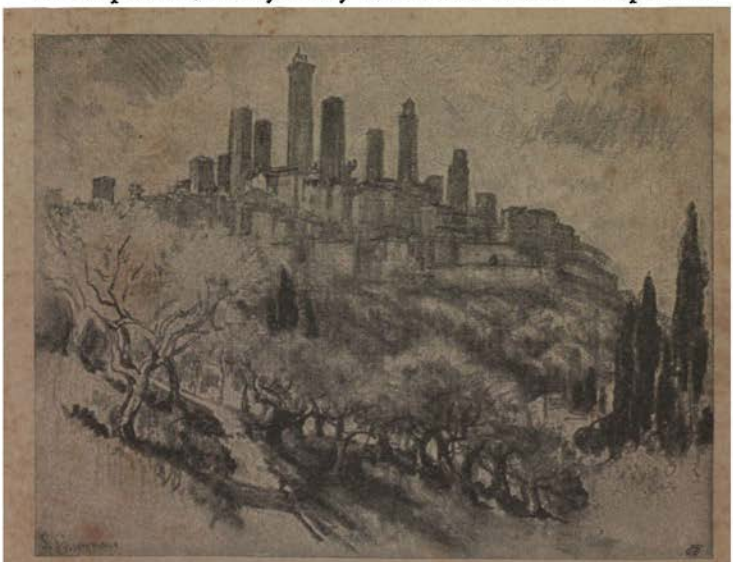
him a letter of reprieve by a messenger on a good



S. GIMIGNANO.

horse. Further communication passed between

the boys in gaol and the San Gimignanesi; Strozzi intercepted one of these, and determined to act. He visited his victims at midnight, and told them they were to die within four hours. Die they did, by decollation, before their own house in the Piazza. An hour or so late came in the reprieve, delayed by a flood in Elsa. Reprisals



S. GIMIGNANO.

followed upon this hasty murder. The Ardinghelli rose one night, fired the palace of the Salvucci and drove the owners into the hills, there to couch with the fox. Some of them sought out foxes of another sort, and went to Florence with their griefs. This was just what Florence had desired. She arrayed a host, marched up the Val d' Elsa and the long hill from Certaldo in great strength. Five years' seigniory and a

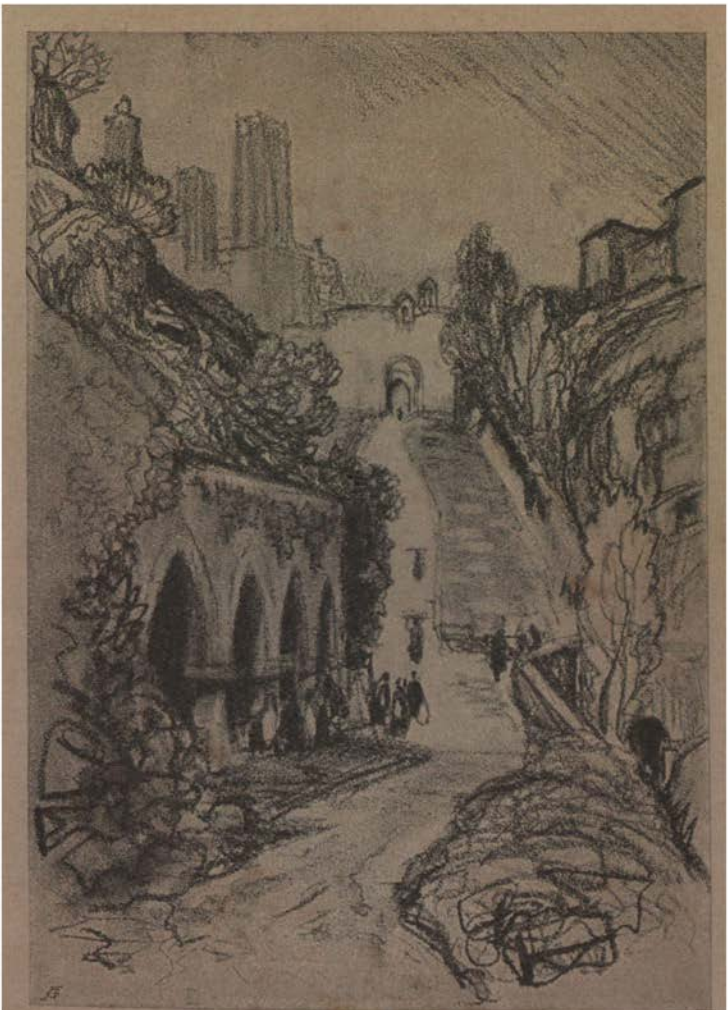
Podestà permanently of Florentine choosing were the wages of this day's work. Within a year—mark the irony of the thing—*on the motion of the Ardinghelli*, Florence was asked to take the lordship altogether. She did. That fortress on Monte Staffoli, the citadel which commands the whole town, is her work.

Now, at night, from the ghostly towers the owls tell the watches with startled, haunting cries. *Kiou!* falters one in a lonely treble, and *Kiou!* comes from afar, like the sudden sob of a child hurt. These are the uneasy sprites of Primeranno and Rossellino Ardinghelli grieving each to other as they re-enact their last night upon earth. Other voices in the dark are to be heard, but none so forsaken as these. Watchmen stray round about the walls heartening each other every hour. "All' erta, sentinello!" you hear close at hand. Wait a little, and catch the distant assurance of the other, "All' erta sto!" But the owls repine without ceasing: a patient iteration which touches the heart, not because the sorrow is so great, but because the mourners are so small.

La Miseria.

I never saw a town so poor with a folk so gentle under their misery. Every one asks, but nobody begs—that is, they wait near by, searching your face with their immense eyes, saying nothing, hoping against hope that you will read and understand their necessity. "La miseria fa vendere ogni cosa," said a poor gentlewoman to me one day. She lived in the corner of one vast room of a palace: a fresco was on the wall, which was what I had come to see. I think she was not without hopes that, in my magnificent foreign way, I should lay

down a roll of bank-notes, and send in workmen



WASHING-PLACE, S. GIMIGNANO.

to chip out the painting from the wall. If these

were her dreams she did not utter them, but it was not hard to see that she was prepared to sell her shelter from the wind. That palace of hers —for it was her own! A great approach through a gateway into a courtyard, a flight of shallow, marble stairs to the *pian' nobile*, and then that long bare hall with coffered ceiling, two fireplaces (but never a fire), frescoed walls, all the garniture of the old noble life, and this poor soul encamped in it with a deal table, a chair, and a paraffin lamp for all her service. Works of the Florentine masters are not to be seen on these terms: there was nothing to be done but bend the head and go. I left on tiptoe, as if I had ignorantly trespassed upon a mystery. And had I not? Was she not a figure of the San Gimignanesi trembling in this city of towers too big for them?

One more act of this tragic pageant—for play you cannot call it where it is all in dumb show. Standing on the steps of the inn, considering the various little diversions of the piazza—gossips at the well, a policeman being shaved on the pavement, the nearing bells of the *diligence* from Poggibonsi, and what not—I became aware of a very old man bowing bare-headed before me. He was in such rags as a scarecrow could not maintain in my country, but he had silver-white hair. His hat was in his hand; he bowed down before my splendour—God forgive me—as if I myself had been a god. I was humiliated to the dust. If by any shocking act of insult or contumely I could have stung him into dignity I declare I would have done it. Anything to make him hold up his head, cover it, and put me in my place. But no! A silver-haired old man, purified

by eighty years' lustration in the waters of misery, he bowed himself down to me, and I could only escape by degrading him still lower. I suppose I gave him money; he blessed my lordship as he went away. "Italy," thought I, "is abased like thee. All the glories of her name and blood; Cæsar's empery, Peter's throne, the immortal

GATE, S. GIMIGNANO.

eyes of Dante, the wine of Beatrice's spirit, are set out, as on a huckster's tray, to be so many lures for our shillings. Italy is upon the town, trades her beauties, and cherishes them only that they may fetch the more. We, therefore, who ought to make our prayer of humble access on our knees before we dare lift our eyes to her immortal shape, saunter through her cities with lorgnettes, doubt if Giotto painted this, think he might have

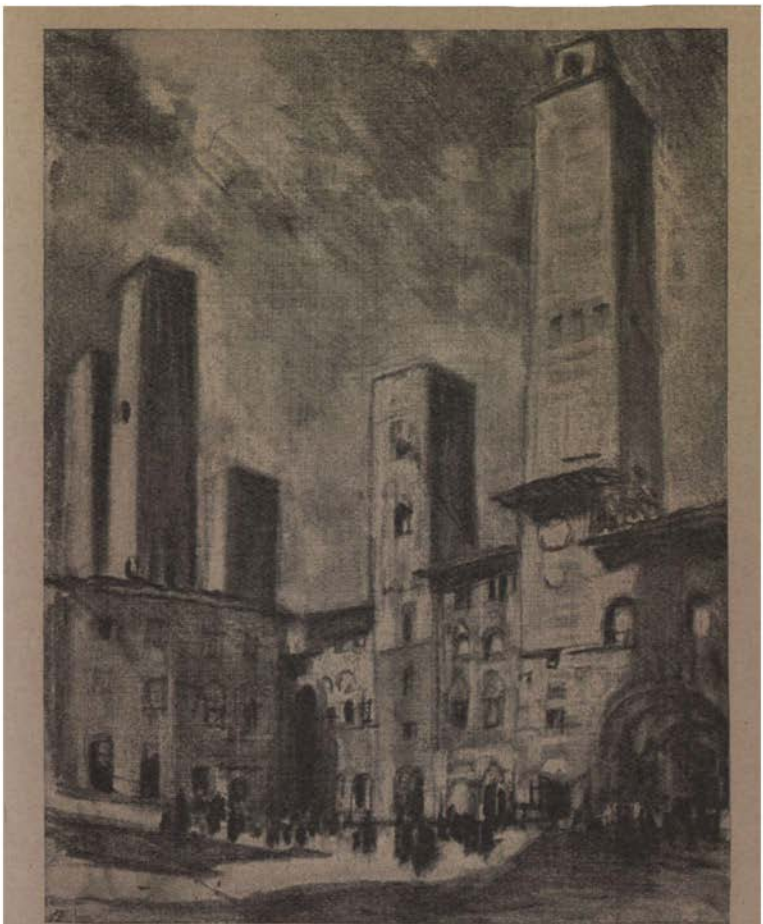
bettered that, and measure the fingers and toes of Baldovinetti's angel-children to see whether they are the fruit of wedlock or bastardy!" So it is, then, that San Gimignano is all Italy in small. The treasure of old sorrow is so sacred a thing that one can hardly dare look full upon it, I think. But Italy offers it for sale or hire. You can buy your share in it from Cook and Sons, and Herr Baedeker has engrossed the catalogue. *La miseria fa vendere ogni cosa.*

"The earth and every common sight."

And here am I, who ought to be glossing Herr Baedeker's text, railing at my stock-in-trade. I shall not be his scholiast here because the things which he did not see seem to me so much more precious than those which he did see. He saw the museum, but I saw the custode of it, a very noble priest. He saw the fresco, but I its poor, patient proprietress. He saw the inn and said it was a good one. So it is; but I saw the innkeeper's pretty daughter, and was witness to the unuttered, unutterable passion of the waiter for her. Afflicting torment! It was highly detrimental to the service. If I forbear to speak of this tragi-comedy, and pass it over for some of the masterpieces of the Florentine school which fill two churches here, it is not because I think these latter are so much to the purpose in San Gimignano—for indeed they are far from the purpose—as things which are the efflorescence of the very soil and air;[1] but

[1] The point in which all centres is this, for the traveller: will he study Tuscany or the Tuscans? I do not hesitate to say that I find people more entertaining than pictures, and more germane to the matter of us all.

rather that I may speak of Santa Fina, and yet again in praise of the incomparable Ghir-



S. GIMIGNANO.

landajo, who has dignified her maudlin legend beyond belief, and made a beautiful and tender

little drama out of the clot-brained ecstasies of the hagiologist.

Let no one henceforward refuse Ghirlandajo the name of poet. This is what he has done here. The acts of Santa Fina are written at large in a little octavo,—"Ragguaglio istorico della vita, miracoli e culto immemorabile della gloriosa vergine Santa Fina di Sangimignano raccolto a consolazione de' suoi divoti e dedicato alla medesima Santa da Pietro Paolo Maria de' Medici, nobil Patrizio e Accademico Fiorentino,"—where you may find within that flood of verbiage which only an Italian can command, the thin wisp of weed which stands for the deeds of her short life. At two years old she was in the way of saintship, at four she began to fast; at eight a little boy gave her an apple at the well-head, and she took it: "Whereupon she was taken with great affliction, fear and horror at the fault, and lively prayed our Lord Jesus Christ, with fervent orations and with tears, that He, by the intercession of His holy Mother and the merits of the Pontiff Saint Gregory, to whom she bore particular devotion, would inflict such pains upon her body that never more might she have occasion to sin. And this most urgent prayer of hers was heard by the Most High"—who smote her with extreme bodily infirmity, as you shall hear. At ten years old she took to her bed of board—five feet by two, and there she lay, rotting and rotting, until at fifteen she died. For she neither moved nor would be moved for common purposes of cleanliness: "per la qual duro decubito attaccatasi la carne alla detta tavola, e venuta finalmente a

Santa Fina in legend.

marcirsi, oltre ai vermi che scaturirono dalla

PALAZZO PUBLICO, S. GIMIGNANO.

putredine quivi formata, vi concorrevano persino

i topi a lacerarla, quando non vi era chi li discacciasse, conforme attestarono molte persone degne di fede, che in occasione di visitarla vedeano uscire detti animali dalle concavità, che rodendo avevano fatte in quella tormentatissima parte; soffrendo così e giorno e notte con generosa pazienza, come può credere ognuno, un complesso ben grande d' inusitati tormenti:" I excuse myself from translating these disgustful imaginings—as to which it may be added, for the sake of the curious, that worse are to be found in the book—and will add simply, that her mother died by act of devil and permission of God before the saint was at the end of her glorious decomposition; that Saint Gregory in splendour announced her own approaching death; and that her nurse, one Beldia, through touching her corrupted body got infection in the hand. Die at last she did, at fifteen years old—having done (on the hagiologist's own showing) nothing but rot—; and on the day of her death the bells of San Gimignano rang of themselves; and when they had got her off the plank to which she was loathsomely glued, she diffused unearthly, seraphic fragrance, and cured at a touch the stricken hand of Beldia. On my conscience there is no more. Now see what Ghirlandajo makes of it in his two frescoes.

Ghirlandajo's version.

As I read him, his Mystery is in two acts. The first is in the cottage, where Fina lies mortally stricken and on a plank bed, but exquisitely decent, with pure face, still body, and intent, feverish eyes. There is extraordinary solemnity, a hush, over the clean, whitewashed place, which is poor enough of all

but the graces of the land. Outside the door are roses and the full sun; through the unglazed window you can see a dappled sky, blue distance of wooded hill. Saint Gregory floats in at the door in cope and mitre; cherubim are his acolytes, with inhuman, little burning faces; he gives his message, "Prepare thyself, daughter": and Santa

S. GIMIGNANO.

Fina never moves her bright eyes from his face. Hers is too desperate a case for astonishment; moreover, as one bed-ridden for many years, she has the egoism of the sick, and takes this annunciation as her due. The old woman at her head, whose hand supports her, is not astonished either, but looks shrewdly at the apparition, as if suspicious. And in that she is a true cottage woman. She, too, accepts the

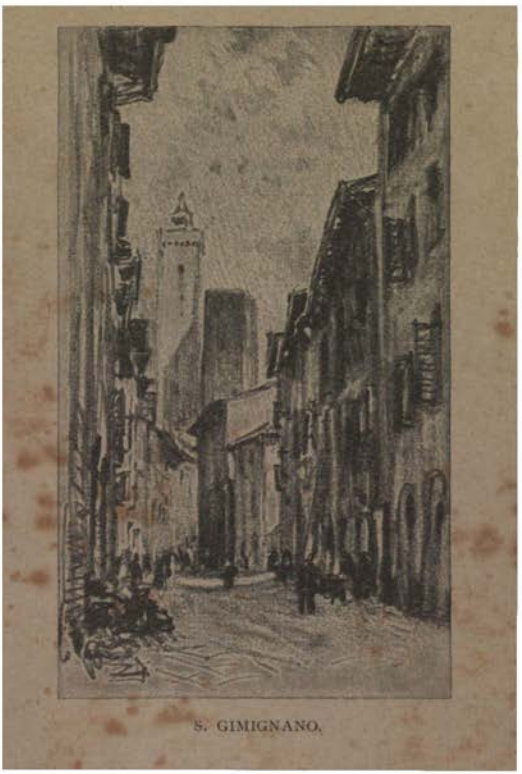
honour as her daughter's due. The other woman

THE WALLS, S. GIMIGNANO.

—for there are two sitting with the girl, on low stools by her bench—lifts her hand. She is

startled, but no one moves. It is all hushed over with the coming of the shadow.

Santa Fina, says Ghirlandajo, did not die in the cottage, as the hagiologist reports, and there were no filthy ceremonies of rat-chasing or



S. GIMIGNANO.

rending blue flesh from boards. When they had brushed out her long rippling hair, and clothed her in a thin silk gown from neck to feet, she was carried on a bier to a little oratory, and there with prayers and the chanting of boys' voices she lay and waited for the Bridegroom,

herself the meek and fair bride. In due course the light of day became an offence and her eyelids a burden; so she closed them, and began the last vision. Frightened a little, a little needing her mother, she reached out a hand, and found what she needed. It was her last act; for as she did it, she sighed—and that was all. Now, while all this was doing, an angel of God flew from tower to tower and set the bells ringing—but softly, lest the San Gimignanesi should think Volterra was come upon them unawares. Ghirlandajo saw him at it, a trim little figure, cleaving the blue with crisp wings, hovering a moment—like a white butterfly—as he touched a bell, then flitting to the next tower.

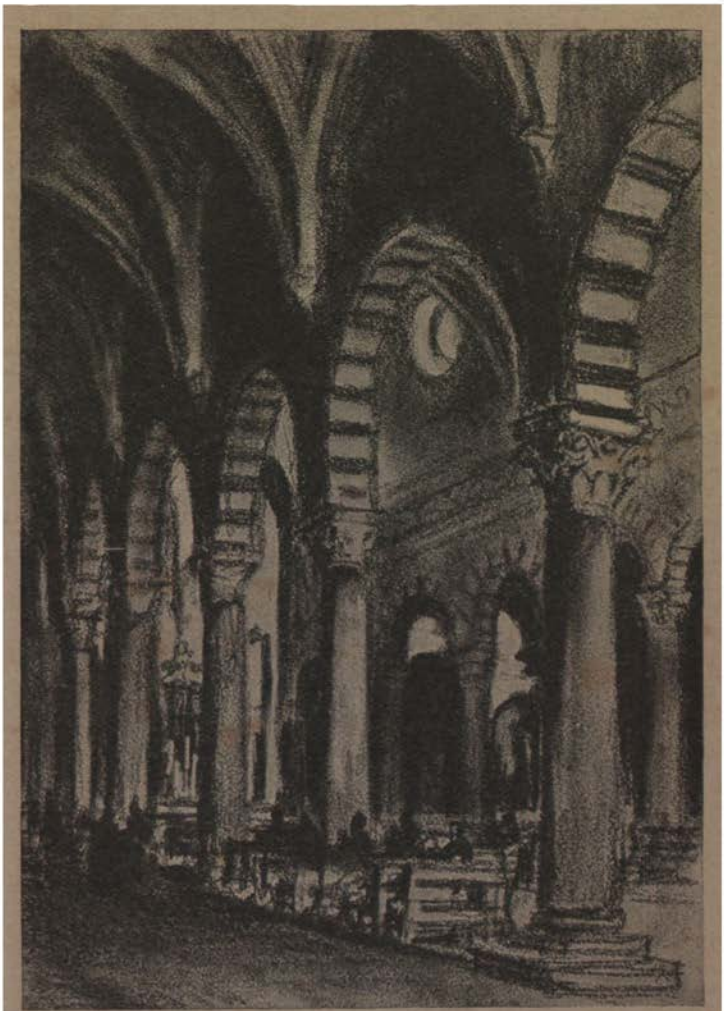
> The waies, through which my weary steps I guyde
> In this delightful land of Faëry,
> Are so exceeding spacious and wyde,
> And sprinckled with such sweet variety. . . .

If Ghirlandajo, the old shop-keeping artist, could sprinkle the unholy spawn of cloister-thoughts, it was because he was a poet without knowing it. All honour to him!

Another highly poetical piece may not be omitted: I mean Benozzo's fresco in Sant' Agostino. It is one of many by this delightful contriver, for he has set out in candid order the whole story of that gloomy hero, from the age when he was spanked to that at which he was received into heaven; but charming as these are—full of cavaliers, ladies, and pretty boys in the most delightful architecture out of Mr. Buzzard's bride-cake shop—there are better of the sort at Pisa, which

Benozzo.

illuminate, moreover, wholesomer stories. But



COLLEGIATE CHURCH, S. GIMIGNANO.

over the Sebastian altar is a very different affair,

wherein Benozzo has shown his seriousness for once, and done what I have never seen attempted before or since. There has been—there is in progress—a pestilence, whereunder the people sicken suddenly, stiffen, and die. Sebastian in blue stands upon his tomb with a host of devotees clinging, kneeling, crying, raving about him. Angels crown him and break arrows in the sight of God omnipotent, who with His chivalry about Him and the Holy Ghost in His lap, Himself holds an arrow, as acceptable tribute from His servant.

But—the plague not stayed—before God kneel Christ and his mother, wooing His high clemency. Christ shows his wounded side—"Father, see where they pierced me. Stay now, therefore, Thy hand: let my torment suffice!" But Mary—the meek girl stung at last—with a gesture of extraordinary passion and pride, rips open her bodice and lays bare her bosom. "By these breasts whereon Thou didst hang—save the San Gimignanesi." The appeal cannot be gainsaid. I never saw a thing so daring done so well. It is exactly another of those little strokes of real imagination which lifts shop-keeping Benozzo, with shop-keeping Domenico his neighbour, out of the rank of tradesman to that of poet. Such a thing ill done has immortalised many worse painters than Benozzo Gozzoli.

This apart, Sant' Agostino is a fine bare preacher's church, of the barn-roof order (as it should be), with a mort of dead Austin friars in low relief upon the pavement. Opposite the door of entry is a great piece—the Adoration of

the Cross—with a fine landscape of the Arno and Pisa spread about it.

[NOTE. — The traveller shall remark in the Collegiate Church of this town two wooden statues by the door—as to which, if he care to know it— I have something to say at the end of the next chapter.]

THE VILLA BOECKLIN, FLORENCE

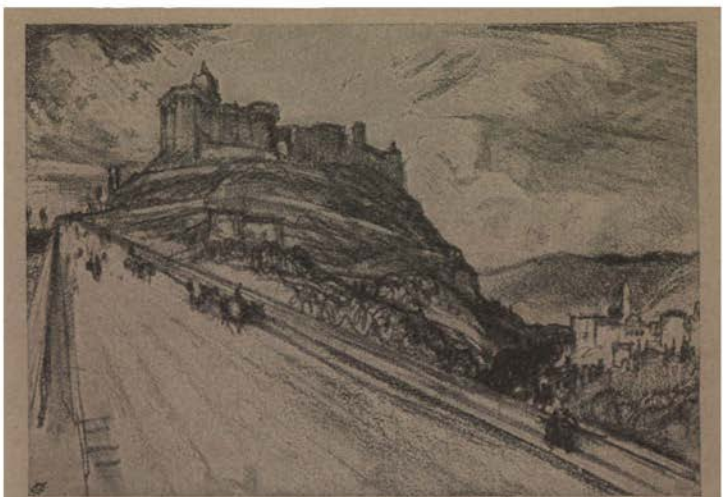
CHAPTER XVIII

VOLTERRA

A TALL shepherd, motionless upon the verge of a bare hill, frightened my vetturino badly. One saw the creature stand up there like a weather-tossed old tree, in severe isolation against the sky, with something long, and thin, and straight under his arm. It proved to be an umbrella, which might well have been a gun; certainly, if landscape has anything to do with the procreation of brigands, a gun it should have been. For after leaving Castel San Gimignano and the deep woods which come next—woods which clothe the sides of gorges, woods of dense boscage and wet spaces, of grey shale, black ilex, cyclamens, and ever-falling water; after climbing to Spicchiaiola, and resting there in the shade in communion with the curate's niece—*familiarmente trattando* with this amiable woman over a flask of the curate's wine; after such-and-such comfortable assurances of all being well, the country side changed for the worse, grew bald and sinister, as if a blighting wind had swept over it; and instead of smiling, grinned. The sun was not hidden, yet ceased to shine;

Pathetic fallacy.

the sun stared. Hearts might well sink and nerves go taut. The landscape was hostile, inspiring terrors; the pathetic fallacy—prodigious egotism, only possible to poets and the Hebrews of old—was never so plausible. Trombino, from sitting squarely on his box, looking comfortably at his horses' wagging ears, and flicking them when he could with his whip, was now all eyes



THE ROAD TO VOLTERRA.

and ears of his own. *Brutto paese!* but he meant more than that. He was off his balance; no longer a disposer, but a huddled thing to be disposed of. Every dreary heave of that pale wilderness spoke to him of menace, of adverse gods, of earth estranged and ourselves forsaken, cowering in the midst. He was all agog for alarms; Pan had resumed his mastery, had this once jaunty fellow at his mercy, and could have

palsied the heart of him and cloven his tongue to palate by any sudden shock. Say, there had been a *cacciatore* in those wastes who, pursuing finch or thrush to the utterance, should have let off his piece, Trombino would have tumbled to his prayers. But no sound broke the heavy suspense; the sick land lay stupid, clammy with fear. Trombino drooped, the whip drooped, the horses crawled like lice.

The awful form of the man on the hill, rigidly waiting, changed all this; or, rather, embodied it. The landscape had found its voice; here was something more wearing to stretched nerves than a sudden ambush.

"*Con rispetto parlando*," said Trombino from his perch, "there on that hill-crest awaits us a brigand. Momently we are all dead men."

There is only one attitude to assume with a Tuscan servant upon occasions of difficulty or stress, that of cheerful permanence, of inexorable, but benevolent, order. *Avanti* is the word for the road—otherwise, why is one there? Therefore——

"*Sempre avanti, Trombino*," said I; and counted, not without confidence, upon his fine manners.

"*Come lei crede*," said Trombino, and urged his beasts towards the brigand. "*Avanti, hep!*" —he cracked his whip till the spell-bound welkin rang. Good soul, with exactly the same words and act he would have obeyed me though the Chimæra had stood fire-belching in his road. Nay, had the earth yawned and discovered him a pit of blackness, *Avanti* from me had made a Quintus Curtius of him. It made no difference

at all that the brigand resolved into a musing shepherd.

You pass a tower on the left, shortly after leaving a wayside calvary and gipsy camp. A tower, do I say? Such as it is, it stands on a hill of its own, dominating the desolation, the picture of maimed nudity; for whereas it was square once and looked out with a bold face to all the airts, now but a single wall stands up to speak of a thousand years' attacks. In 925, as I read the books, King Hugh gave to Bishop Adelard the Monte della Torre, with this tower then upon it, to be a warning to the San Gimignanesi; who countered, I suppose, with their castle some eight miles to the east—that Castel San Gimignano where they sell clean wine, a Vernace with a fame as old as the fortress. And all these things are in a concatenation accordingly. San Gimignano, abode of gentler misfortune, makes a wine-shop of its outpost: Volterra, snarling wolf that can never be tamed to turn a spit, stands at its sentry-go and crumbles brick by brick as the weather will have it, and snarls at every wound. But I digress, if Volterra will not. Hereafter a little, from a higher ground, you will see that the lowlands which stretch away to the south have not been blighted with the accursed fate of the city. Soft purple valleys are enfolded down there; a floating haze over all gives you the thought that there stirs an enchanted sea, whose islands are the little hills, each crowned with a glimmering burgh. I saw Pomarance—Heavens, the Arabian name! —and nearer in, Casole d' Elsa, Monte Guidi, San Dalmasio. Next to Semifonte, which no-

Monte della Torre.

body can ever see, because it lies buried in the bosom of a grey down, I regretted Pomarance, which perforce I left, red and misty in the south, while I climbed ever higher to harsh Volterra. Round the naked knee of a hill I had my first view of it. Trombino pointed it out: "*Ecco Volterra!*" If he added not his *Deo gratias*, I mistake him. It lay in the afternoon, in the sun's eye, as they say, upon what seems to be the highest of these mountains of mud, and presented an extraordinarily squalid appearance. I quarrel with other of Macaulay's images: he loved rhetoric too well, I doubt. Cortona could never have lifted a diadem of towers to heaven in any pre-eminent way. It lies now, where it must have lain from old-time, like a cemetery strewn upon a hillside. And so here, his "lordly Volaterræ" shows at first view a squat heap of brown building and one or two stunted towers, posts for cattle to scratch at. This is not a city which could ever have looked lordly, for it climbs the apex of its hill and falls down, more than half, on the other side; so that from whatever point you make your approach there is none of the culmination which a hill-town should have. The great fortress by the gate impresses itself upon you as you draw near; monstrous bulk, monstrous strength, such dignity as consists with mass, it has. The huge walls are of a piece; work of giants, titanic, but not lordly. Etruscan heads directed all this immensity; what goaded slave-hordes wrought it, I know not. It looks as inert and spiritless as convict labour; gloomier Etruscan stronghold Herr Baedeker can never have seen. Fiesole is savage, Chiusi mournful,

Perugia a termagant; Volterra has the dulness of the brute.

You do but get a premonition of it as you climb the weary leagues into the town, and have no time to enlarge it, since you are to be shocked again. When the sinister country has you fast, when your spirits have flagged to their lowest, suddenly, a huge blood-

Terrific apparition.

VOLTERRA.

coloured cliff confronts you, clothed in scrub to the peak, the Mons Tumba of this muddy waste. Backed by a storm-cloud, abode for vampires and snakes, spell-struck into silence, it terrifies you. It is as if all your flying fears, winging to a point, should take shape: a bare grey land, a storm brewing in the north, and a blood-red cliff dead in your way. Thus fared knights-errant in the old tales when they took their lives in their hands.

"And Pereduc journeyed three days and three nights over the desert. And he came to a great mountain in the midst, which was as red as blood, and hight Pavidus." "*Brutto paese!*" quoth Trombino, a snug youth for choice.

Bevis of Hampton.

John Villani, most friendly of historians, always on the look-out for the letter of introduction to antiquity, says that Volterra was first called Antonia, and that, "according to the romances," here we have the origin of the good Beuves of Antonia. By this long bow-shot he arrogates to the Volterrani our English hero, the late-born, the chaste, the pudibond Bevis of Hampton, whom Drusiane (much to his confusion) kissed under the table. I believe he got his story from the "Dittamondo," where, Fazio says,

> We saw Volterra near by this
> On a great hill, as strong and old
> As any town of Tuscany's,
> Antonia hight, whence I am told,
> Came Bevis, who, for Drusiane's sake,
> Oversea suffered heat and cold.

I cannot agree with this poet, holding, as I must (in first-rate company), that the hero was of Southampton. The "Reali di Francia," a hostile witness, says that all England rejoiced at his birth. It is true that the faithful tutor of the child, according to the same authority, was called Sinibaldo dalla Rocca San Simone, which is not a Hampshire name; and it may well be that this *rocca* was the lurid bluff on the road to Volterra before which I am keeping you horrific while I muse. Now I have never learned the name of this bluff; but if Sinibaldo (whom we call Saber) was lord of it there was a great education for

young Bevis, and the wicked Duodo of Maganza might have had old besieging it. But these, perhaps, are not practical speculations.

Once past this fatal place you have the grim bulk of the *fortezza* towering over your way. As my own *cortège* crawled up, I remember that a little company of madmen strayed about us, going slowly home-

The madmen.

VOLTERRA.

wards to Volterra—fit pinfold!—herded by one man in a Government cap. He seemed glad of my company, so I conversed with him a little. His madmen were very old, but had, he told me, all been homicides in their day. Solitary confinement had done its work; they would lay hands suddenly on no other men. So the law allows them to roam at will, to pick wild-flowers and twist garlands for their white pows: a peaceful

ending to their labours. They looked upon us, our equipage and advance, with mild unwondering eyes. Once we had been grist for their long knives, but now were less than the flowers in the hedgerow. After life's fitful fever . . .

A straggling suburb succeeded, a row of drab houses, a cheerless *trattoria* with unglazed windows, pigs, chickens, children, stern-faced women in men's hats—here are disjected notes. A diligence came tearing down the hill, full of scared pale people escaping from Volterra; but we crept ever upwards and trailed painfully by the walls, the watch-tower, the great boulder of the fortress, and entered the doomed city by the Florence Gate. Trombino flogged the horses into a feeble canter, and brought us up to the door of the old inn with some sort of a rattle.

> Cut a thin reed from scream-beset Scamander
> For hazard of this music!

No one came out to receive us. It might have been a dead-house; and so it was. Wind-tortured abode of madmen and grey murderers! Heart of earthquakes, fallen, still falling Volterra! It wanted but this. But I must endeavour to be calm.

Volterra.

To our notions—whose inns are as good as our hotels are bad—there is no comfort, but much hospitality in a Tuscan inn. At Volterra, the fact is that I had neither; but there were reasons. Mr. Carmichael, in a recent and agreeable work, shows that he found something to his taste. His landlord, however, was not dying of typhoid as mine was. To me all Volterra was exactly accursed,

from the landlord to the land A raw sea-mist was blown upon a searching wind through all the corridors of the house. Mad old women whispered and chuckled to themselves in corners, pawing and patting, as it seemed to me, waxen figures of the stricken host. Now and then there came a scurrying of fear-fanned feet, now and then the clanking of pails, the sudden banging of doors. A daughter of the house was in tears, her sister in hysterics; the doctor spat upon the floor, signifying his diagnostic pother. Death alone sat hale in the guest-chambers, and had bespoken the chief seat at the feast. Clearly, all these things were far from Mr. Carmichael, who was able to ruminate with unencumbered mind upon the Etruscans, the alabaster industry, and the land-slip—as most pleasantly he does in his little Tuscan book. To me the gloom, the shadow, the cruel sea-wind with its tainted burden of fog, blighted the eyes, and perhaps struck a palsy upon the judgment. But I am by no means so sure that this, which has been foretold by the road, is not sealed to Volterra by history. Books are not alone in the world to have their weaving fates. Far more truly than they, towns speak the nature of men and their sort in this life. I can read the chronicles or not, as I choose, but cannot fail to read in dark and silent streets, in bare piazzas, and naked grey walls of ragged church and ragged palace, confirmation of the godless rule of wicked old prince-bishops. Hark to their names! Hildebrand, Ranier, Payn, and suchlike, implying all that was to follow: the treachery of the led against their leaders, eager to forestall that of the leaders against themselves;

the black nightwork of Rinaldo degli Albizzi and Palla Strozzi, and that havoc which Lorenzo wrought there when he killed man, woman, and boy, and the child at the breast—for which also, according to Savonarola's friends, he died without housel.

Of such is the history of Volterra. Its bishops were princes of the empire, stark men and Ghibellines, belying the fisherman.[1] To their tyranny succeeded that of a traitor-race, the Belforti, begun in treachery and ending by it. The Duke of Athens lorded it here for a year: but that was all the length of rope allowed him. He had time to build the Rocca Vecchia, and might, with a little more grace, have been its first tenant. The gods saw otherwise: he was not to die in prison. Florence, which in that fortunate year of hers (1254) had reduced Pistoja, beaten Siena in the open, and by that stroke secured Montalcino, Montennana, and Poggibonsi, had gone on from that last place across the frightful country to Volterra and had had it by luck—Florence then got her first taste of a city she was afterwards to sack three times before she could retain it for ever. Villani's tale of this capture is a good one. He says that the Florentines left Poggibonsi to come hither because Volterra was Ghibelline and the Guelphic League just then in ascendency. There was no thought of taking, even of attacking one of the strongest positions in Italy; if they could lay waste the country round about they would go

[1] When a bishop was also a prince the world was too much with him; he was never for the Church, it seems. Arezzo had similar masters, Ghibellines to a man.

home well pleased. But God, says Villani, gave them victory suddenly, for the Volterrani, seeing the host close to their gates, with great pride and arrogance came flooding out —all their chivalry without order of war, or captains, or *battalia*—and fell upon the Florentines from the vantage of the hill. The Florentine knights, encouraging each other,

ON THE WALLS, VOLTERRA.

singularly bold for such a timorous race, stormed up and drove the offenders back upon their posts. All went streaming in, besiegers and besieged, fighting and hurtling together. The keepers of the gate, seeing (as they thought) their own people in confusion, had no care but to give them entry-room. In they came, and the Florentines with them. They secured the gates and the fortress as well. Thinking to have harried the

contado, they found themselves masters of the city. The prince-bishop and clergy, cross in hand, came from the church to plead; handsome ladies came, their hair loose, crying for mercy and peace. It is to the credit of the Florentines, if it is true, that they did neither mischief nor spoil. They reformed the Signiory according to their Guelphish lights, banished the heads and chastened the members of the Ghibelline faction, and then went on their victorious way. This was their first hold upon Volterra. Lasting hold came in the fifteenth century, a grip thrice cemented in the citizens' blood.

The Volterrani.

Within this harsh stronghold beleaguered by the wind do dwell a stern, rock-faced people who take no notice whatsoever of the traveller, either to beg or to demand of him, either to rob him or to sell to him. This is so singular a thing that it deserves mention, if not repetition. It is the one place in Tuscany where I have never been asked for a *soldo*, nor ever been informed that anything I might happen to look at was to be had for money. In San Gimignano, you may remember, a woman would have sold me the side of her house because I asked leave to look at a fresco; at Siena, one day, a wretch was to offer me a far dearer merchandise. Nothing of the kind here. Men and women go silently their ways, and which is which is hard to tell, for they dress their heads alike—first a felt hat, then a handkerchief over it, tied under the chin—and alike they have the square jaws and low foreheads of Romans. They are a stunted race, as the pines would be which could thrive upon the stony ground and live out the salt gale which

blows day and night. With their bullet-heads and stiff-angled drapery, I can see them on some Arch of Constantine or another, in severe relief, serried closely in battle-array, or about the altar of a household god. The piazza on market morning showed me just such an effect, when the buyers and sellers stood there in the fine rain, gleaming like old marbles, as expressionless and

VOLTERRA.

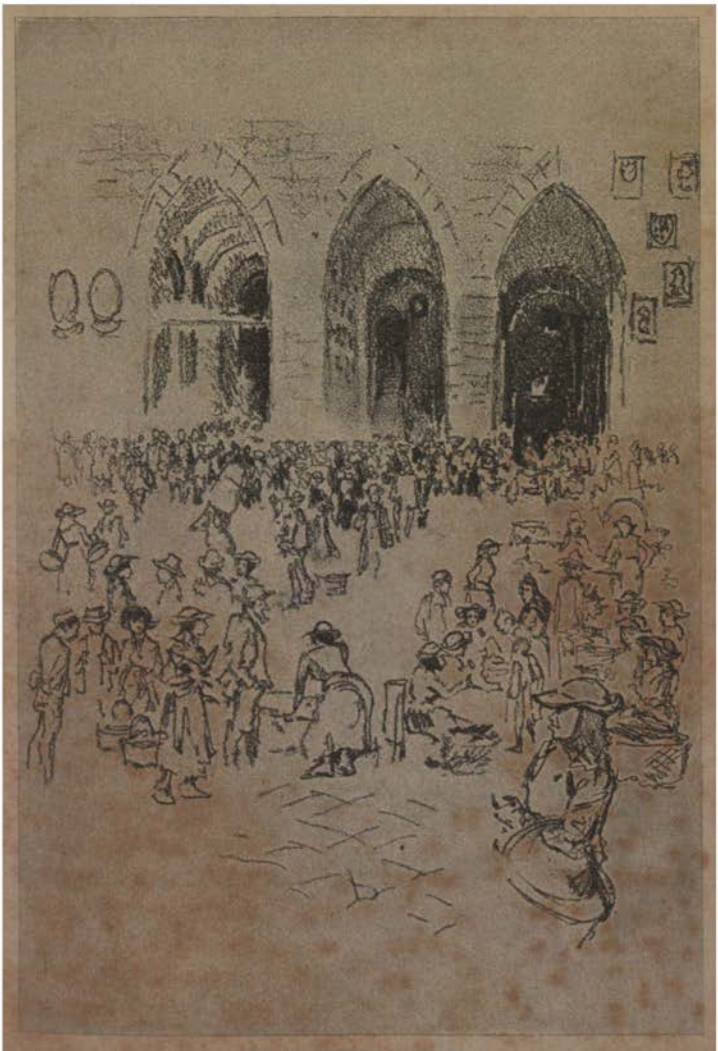
little wetted as they. What women! To woo a bride from Volterra would be to adventure among the Scythians. You would have to fight with your chosen maid—it would be an affair of muscles, tussles, and hard knocks. Having grassed her, you would throw her over your shoulder, like a dead stag, or a Lapith haled home by a Centaur, and so bear her to your house. *Et Venus in silvis*, indeed! One cannot,

of course, be precise upon the point, yet there is every reason to suppose that, like the Amazons, these fierce virgins are maimed.

They wear Roman colours, deep and lurid; grass-green kirtles or sea-blue, orange shawls, orange and black kerchiefs. They carry little crescent sickles in their hands, tools whose use against anything but the person of the lover, or their own, it is hard to see. To buy and sell sickles, and for no other apparent purpose, they hold a market in early morning in the Piazza of the Priors, a gaunt open space surrounded by great strongholds, the east end of the Cathedral being one, half smothered in a palace wall. Whiles, as the Scots has it, they go off to church, and hear masses, or pay uncouth worship to huge blind gods, roughed out of wood, and painted in their own colours—green, orange, crimson, and black. I believe *a fleshed sickle* is the most acceptable oblation a youth or maiden can pay. Such are the Volterrani, and such their gloomy delights.

A strange feature of the place is its general likeness to Florence. It is much what Florence might have become had some malign deity set it to shrivel and lose blood upon the top of a mud-mountain. From the ramp of a little piazza, which you will find not far from the Porta del Arco—between that and the Porta San Felice—you may look down upon a cascade of grey roofs descending to the plain, beyond which a broken headland juts into the sea. Just thereabouts, where the Cecina brook hopes to end its trouble, all is new and wild and beautiful. But if you look then behind you, upwards, you see the land-

marks of a withered Florence—dome, baptistery,



MARKET PLACE, VOLTERRA.

campanile; the Palazzo Vecchio, with its Tower

of the Cow; beyond, again, the Bargello with the skeleton belfry. The illusion is for the moment complete, until you realise that the charm is not there. Then you see that the buildings want dignity, warmth, character; that they are a discord; that they do not represent Volterra so much as travesty Florence.

Nevertheless the Cathedral has an impressiveness of its own. It is on a grand scale, and has a ceiling of surpassing splendour. This is of wood, deeply coffered, enriched with figures in blue, green, and gold. The central square is held by the Spirito Santo encompassed in a cloud of seraphs. In octagons on all sides of him are saints, their heads tending towards him, their bodies from the middle downwards embedded in the wood. Here is a wonderful parallelogram of forces—bishops in golden copes and mitres, yellow-haired virgins in splendid brocades, deacons in dalmatics of white and gold—the saints in levee dress all yearning and spearing to their point of bliss: a fine conception, finely achieved. The august fowl seems to be hovering, more hawk than dove, and those others, witnesses and messengers of His, to get their swiftness from Him. They have strong and handsome faces, broad shoulders, deep chests, immense proportions; they must be twice the size of men, and any one of them would serve for figurehead to a line-of-battle ship. Imps of a race of giants, colossal divinities! To look on men and women at their prayers under the shadow of those burnished wings is to drift back to a day when it was universal belief that God made earth for His disport, gave it a flick to set

Gods.

it spinning, and then forgot all about it. The heavenly throng, busy with a vaster pageantry, was in full sight of men; yet man, except for some chance errantry from on high, had no existence there. But and if a straying son of God saw a daughter of man, that she was fair, then some beauty or another of ours, walking shyly the green ways of earth, would on a sudden be caught up in a gusty draught of enormous love, whelmed and lost in flame—and shine thereafter a lesser light in that high galaxy. Thus mankind, according to this theology, would fitfully preserve a clue to godkind.

But in a chapel of the south transept you can see the graven images of Volterra even better than in the nave. Up there, on the ceiling, you may have their theology; here, at kissing range, is their religion. It is figured by stiff and huge wooden gods dumbly enacting a scene from some blunt old tragedy. Though Herr Baedeker calls it a "Deposition from the Cross," it had far better stand for the Passion of Prometheus. This group, one of the most extraordinary to be seen in Italy, is composed of figures nearly eight feet high, coloured in coarse crimson, blue, and green. One thinks not of the calm Olympians, but of their forerunners, "Kronos, and Gê, and murdered Ouranos," of monstrous revenges, vast pangs, before such a scene. The mystical dolours, reveries, and tender regrets of Christianity appear local. I suppose the piece cannot be earlier than the twelfth century in sober truth; but of this I am sure, that the fashioners of it, and those who fulfil their worship in its contemplation, are not of the new circum-

cision. No son of man hangs here, no handmaid of the Lord bewails him, nor a Joseph of Arimathy offers the hospitality of his new tomb. No! vast, blind forces writhe and suffer; these are cosmical throes; the sun goes down in blood into the sea, and earth stands by, passive and mute, as fixed as her own fate. So here it is that the fierce daughters of Volterra, sickles in their hands, come and offer dreadful self-sacrifice. And here a rock-browed son of the place, leading some virgin captive, espouses her with bloody rites.[1]

[1] Let not the traveller fail to notice, whithersoever he go in European countries, the wooden statues in churches. Art is not always a full-dress business; you are apt to get nearer to the root of the matter in the *borgo* than in the *piazza grande*. Roughly speaking, I do believe that the homelier the stuff and the nearer to hand, the more expressive of emotion the art becomes. Thus, it is undoubtedly true that the Tanagra *figurini* tell you more of Greece than the great smooth marbles which stare through you out of their sightless eyes. In Italy, clay proved a happier material than bronze, and wood came very near to clay. In the museum at Pisa are some beautiful wooden figures of girls—slim, Gothic, low-bosomed creatures in white and blue gowns, with whom the traveller may come to terms at once. I know not what they represented first; but I felt in their company as a child with her household of dolls about her. I was at home with them; they are made of a stuff that once lived, fibrous stuff not different from myself, with marrow in it and sap, and much dependence upon the sun, the earth, and the wind. Whereas between stone, cut from the chill shoulder of the mountain, and me there is an unbridgeable gulf. And if I feel so in beholding, what must not the worker have felt as he wrought? To go on, at San Gimignano, by the west door of the Collegiata, there is a wooden group—Gabriel in red (red, I think) on one side, Virgin in blue on the other—of more value to private devotion, that of the bedside and the dark, than all the Parthenon, Sistine Chapel, six-feet *putti* in Saint Peter's, Golden Altar of Saint Mark's put together. Della Quercia did not disdain wood. The fairest of his Junoesque Madonnas is cut from the heart of a tree, and stands in a golden robe above the altar of San Martino at Siena. From wood Donatello hewed his haggard Magdalene; and one knows what the Spaniards made of it and how close they could draw us to the Agony of Christ. Above them all, to my thinking, is the Volterran group, quite alone in Tuscan art. Nor is anything so terrible, so colossal, and so dim known to me in sculpture. Lastly, it is worth while to reflect whether, in the flat art, anything can approach in poignancy the mosaic of Ravenna and Torcello—and to remember that of the stuff of that art they also make beer-bottles.

CHAPTER XIX

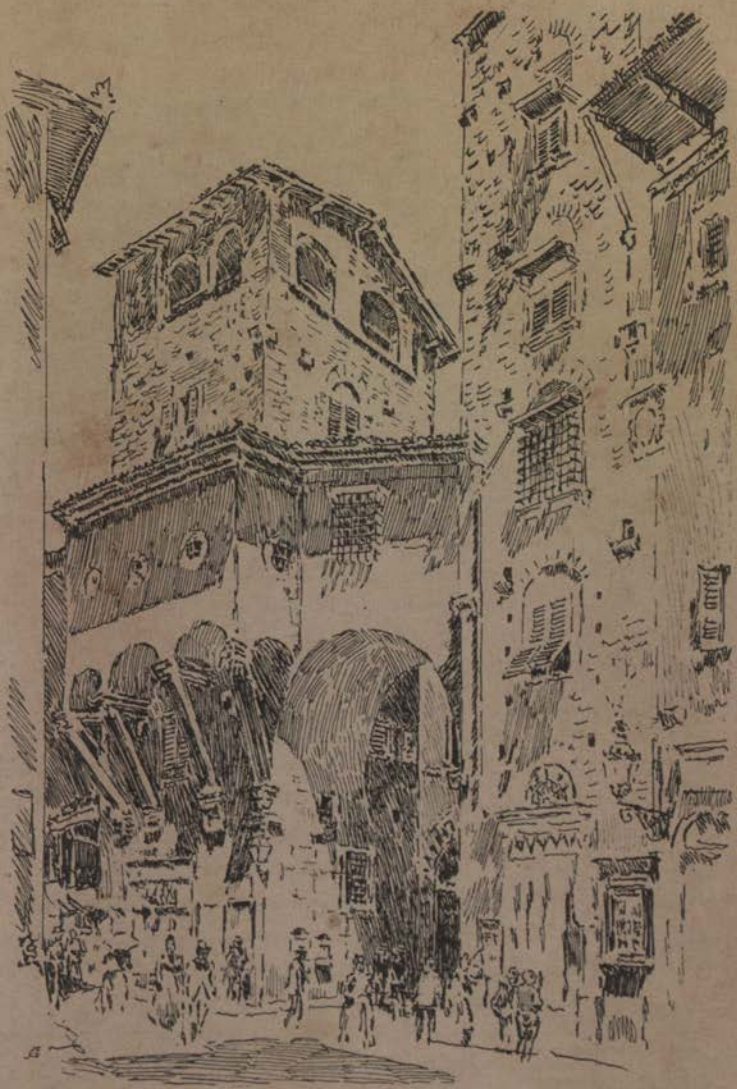
GREVE AND PESA: SAN CASCIANO, POGGIBONSI, COLLE

THE great old highway from the north to Rome went through Arezzo; but Florence possessed three of her own. One was from Empoli by the Val d' Elsa, which now we know; another, nearer home, turned south at Montelupo; the third (and best for Florentine purposes) ran out by the Porta Romana, followed the Greve to San Casciano, then took to the Pesa, and joined the Val d' Elsa road at Poggibonsi. Thence to Siena is but some fourteen miles.

Upon this great outlet of Florence, and of the monstrous cube of masonry it contains, I shall only make two observations. The first is, that the Via Romana by itself is enough to prove that Florence was never built for wheeled traffic; the second concerns the Pitti Palace. If it was ever required to be proved that you can design an enormous building so badly that it will look half its size, here is the proof to hand. One has but to compare it with the Strozzi, which is about half,

Via Romana: the Palace of the Wig.

and looks twice, as big, to be convinced. Luca Pitti, most fatuous, most futile of the Florentines! He promised himself that he would build a house which would hold Filippo Strozzi's in its *cortile*. Firstly, he did not build it; and next, when it was done, although the vaunt was true, nobody would ever believe it. What his own masons would have made of it cannot now be known, for Brunelleschi and Michelozzo were no mean builders; but they never touched it after his downfall, and for near a hundred years it stood a shell. Then Eleonora of Toledo, Cosimo Primo's beautiful wife, admired it; her lord bought it for nine thousand gold florins—surely a very low price, but it is the Osservatore's figure—got Ammanati to add the wings; and lived in it, he and nine grand dukes after him. "Whoever," says the watchful Osservatore, "takes upon himself to pronounce that this edifice is a mountain of masonry, is not considering at all, as he should, the noble design, the strength, and the beauty of the parts, among which is a series of heads of lions upon the parapet of each ground-floor window, in age and character so varied that they form a natural history of this wild beast, so much revered by the Florentines." This is very well; but the Osservatore himself may here be observed in the trammels of the Florentine sin. In matters of art curious ornament was always a snare to these people. To the last they could never perceive that the façade of a church was not to be only a white wall on which to stick hippogriffs. There is no doubt that the deftness of the execution of the Seven Ages of Lions upon this



VIA ROMANA, FLORENCE.

lumpy front completely redeemed it in the Osservatore's eyes.

I like to remember that in this monumental cage lived Giovanni Gastone's Wig, the last of the Medici. In an old engraving which I possess you may see it start for an airing in a coach and six: the carabiniers present arms, the courtiers bow until their noses appear between their legs, guns fire, the beggars limp forward with petitions. With a fine young man on either hand, one to hold a powder-box, the other a comb, the Wig goes in state to high mass in San Lorenzo, above the tombs of its ancestors. This is a great picture; and so is this, where Chiabrera, a rococo poet, hymns the glories of the Pitti. His form is odic and interrogatory.

Pitti, albergo di Regi,
Per le stagion festose,
Quai nelle notte ombrose,
Furo i maggior tui pregi?
Quando udisti d' Orfeo note dogliose
Ver la Città di Dite,
O quando il piè d' argento
In te degnò mostrar l' alma Anfitrite?
O quando al bel concento
Di tumburi guerrieri
Fur tanti Duci altieri
D' infinito ornamento?

The scholiast defeats his purpose, glossing here.

The Certosa and other Sights.

North, east, and west, the tramways have done for the roads out of Florence what the railways have done for the country side. Halfway to Pistoja a tram runs, another to Signa, another to Rovezzano. The south parts are no exception;

there is a tramway to San Casciano which, by driving the whole of the traffic into half of the road, has taught us terrible things. I have found it a dangerous quag in the wet, and in the dry one long bolster of dust. The best stretches of it—and it is a beautiful road—are ruined by this misery. Up the hill, however, and beyond the suburb which, as usual, signalises the gate and the *dazio*, on a plateau of rock, stands the brown Certosa, and looks like a fortress—and has been one in its day. A fine wood of cypress slopes away to the west of it; above the high wall you see a tower, the steep gables of the church; you can make out the cloister, and on the north side the messuages of the monks. Personally, I care little for the inside of this or any monastery in Tuscany, excepting always St. Mark's of Florence.[1] I find this Certosa tawdry, insincere, ceremonious, and *rococo*, containing, nevertheless, one good thing—the tomb of Lorenzo Acciaiuoli. The town just before it is Galluzzo, one mean street; and then, below Tavernuzze, which looks very fine, high up in a cleft of the rocks —white and grey, it is, with one thin tower— your road bears to the right, and piercing the ridge[2] by another cleft, enters a finely-wooded rising country, with the Greve, which failed to drown Buondelmonte's grandsire, running between ferny banks. The road is indeed vile,

[1] The *Seicento* stifled the community life in all sorts of ways. It bred much unwholesome and prurient thought, and it smothered the buildings in stucco and plaster. Notable examples abound. To take but two, consider Monte Oliveto by Buonconvento, and the famous La Verna above Bibbiena. This Certosa is just such another. In the case of San Marco, mercifully, they stopped in time.

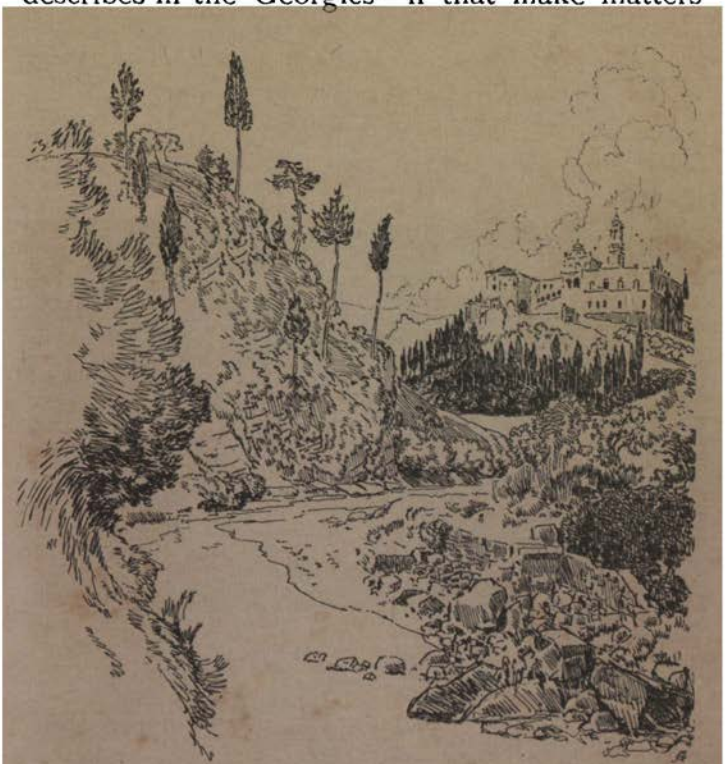
[2] This ridge is actually the Chianti, the more easterly of the two. You have to cross the western ridge also to get to Poggibonsi.

but the setting altogether lovely: an ample curve round an amphitheatre of rocks. These rise boldly in tiers, and are clothed to the very top with pines, so delicate that they look like tufted velvet. Nothing more dainty gay could be imagined than this glen as I saw it last. The blue-green river ran musical among the stones, eglantine and woodbine dipped as it passed; the broom was in flower, the acacias and the may. Nightingales sang at large, the frogs and cicale made a jingling accompaniment; the sun was in the heavens, a soft gale stirred the pines. It was good to be there—but ah, better to be in England. Mr. Browning was not the only man to know that, but he was the first to say it; and perhaps I am not the second. And beautiful as this Val di Greve undoubtedly is, it is not of the Tuscan but of the general picturesque. Characteristic Tuscany is in the next valley.

Emerging from San Casciano, a town which only looks well from a distance, and calls for no remark; you get to the open country, with the western Chianti ridge straight before you. A country is this aboundingly fertile; olives, with flax, corn and maize in between them, mulberry trees to carry the vines. Not an inch of ground is wasted —a sight which would have gladdened the eyes of Mr. Arthur Young, and would have gladdened them more if he had not speculated what, with proper appliances, the yield might have been. I found a plough by the wayside just here and stayed to examine it. The whole was of wood, including the share. It had no wheels, but had

San Casciano, Pesa, Val di Chianti.

to be haled by main force of two oxen through the marl. I suppose it drove a furrow of six inches. It is almost exactly that which Virgil describes in the Georgics—if that make matters



THE CERTOSA, FLORENCE.

any better. But as to the produce, for my own part, I shall not care greatly what amount they win from their splendid earth until I can be sure that the yield goes into the right mouths. At present I fear it does

not. The proprietor is content, the *fattore* content (or he ought to be); the *contadino* peddles along, and at all events fills his belly from the ground he tills. He looks to do, and does, no more. But the labourer? Practically, he starves; a fine, limber, gentle-mannered animal, beautiful when he is young, but too soon old, he is always hungry, never knows the taste of meat. And yet he is a poet:

VAL DI PESA.

Musam meditatur avena!—to twist the tag, Edinburgh fashion.

Let us now cross Pesa by a fine bridge of brick and accost the western Chianti. Once you are across it, you are in the Val d' Elsa; but you must rise and dip, and rise again before you see Poggibonsi and San Gimignano's towers. You go up by a cypress wood, whose tops are like spears in an ambush, and round about a rocky spur, which in these parts they call Poggio

Petroio, and so gradually top the first blade of the two-edged down. It is some of the best land in Tuscany, a tilth of corn and wine and oil

THE CERTOSA, FLORENCE.

indeed, and I could not traverse it without a sense that I was on holy ground. For between Strada, just beyond Pesa Bridge, and Tavarnelle

on the crest lay Semifonte, the buried city.[1] The smiling fields—all in their spring finery of red-brown diapered with green—the olives, which look lavender in the sun, know nothing of it. Look from ridge to ridge, look east, look west; San Casciano far behind you is the only town to be seen. Here stood Semifonte! Well, perhaps the olives grow the better for its bones.

Tavarnelle, wide-streeted and comfortable, is on the very top of this Chianti ridge; a mile or more beyond it, you round a corner and come in full view of the broad Val d' Elsa, than which I know no prospect more attractive in a quiet way of its own. It is pastoral country, yet with a spice of classic formality in the way the towns are dotted in, each exactly fitting its own pedestal. It is, we may say, a Claude Lorraineish, Nicholas Poussinesque sort of country: nymphs, goats, ruins, towns on hill-tops, bunchy trees, and a velvety texture over all. It has character; it has some mystery, for all those far-off towns look more grandiose than in fact they are. It is quietly but admirably composed; it chastens the fancy; it leads the mind from the politicians to the people, from the artists to the artisans. To put the matter in a nutshell, it is exactly like Gray's *Elegy*—a restrained, academic landscape. Immediately before you, as you stand, is Barberino, heaped up like a cairn upon the top of a mound—a warm foxy-brown and cream-coloured village, with an open-work belfry to its church and a look-out tower as warden of the east. Here, as I have

Elsa, and all her little towns.

[1] See Chapter XVI., where I have spoken at large about this place.

always chosen to suppose, lived La Nencia, that nymph of the orchards whose loves Lorenzo sang most excellently well.[1] Indeed, I thought that I had seen her as I passed, in an olive garden, with a yellow shawl over her head. Over and beyond Barberino, over the western slope, you can just see the roofs of Certaldo; beyond that again, looking S.W., sheer across the vale, deep in purple shadows, is San Gimignano, sad little city, with its thirteen towers clumped together into seven. Farther round towards the south is Poggibonsi, a warm heap of buildings, with a tower or two. The prospect should please you.

Poggibonsi is a merry town, where I heard more laughter in half an hour than in Florence in a week. It has two fine churches, externally, and a castello, so ornate and trim that I suspect it of *rifacimento*, and the town of having wasted its pence. The great church has a Tuscan belfry of the true sort—a turreted tower; the invariable palladian façade is stuck against the body of the nave, with the invariable result that it is misleading seen from before and ridiculous from any other point of view. The interior is neo-classical, in the manner of Santo Spirito at Florence—a plain cross in shape, with Doric columns and entab-

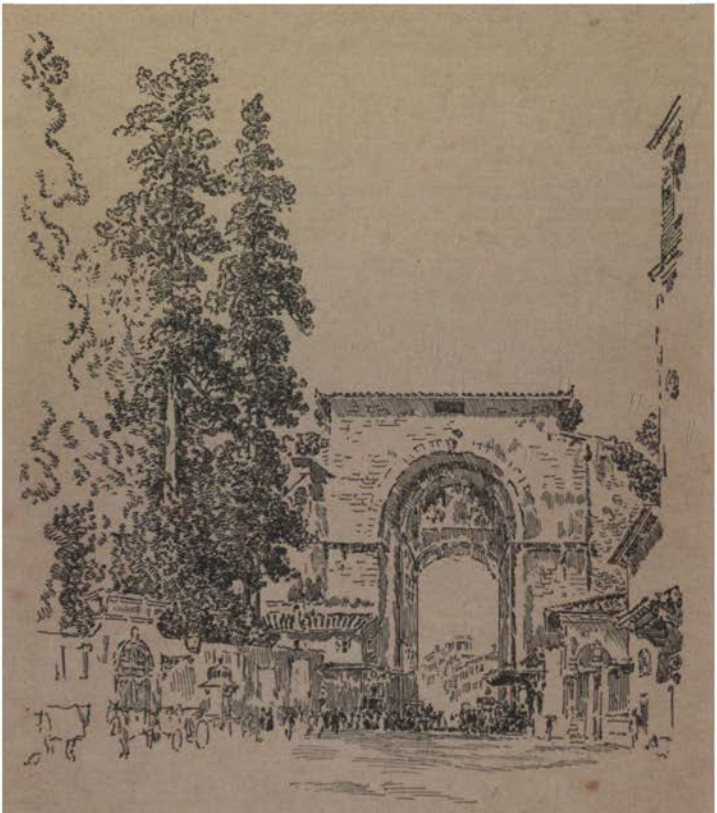
Poggibonsi.

[1] It is certain, I am bound to confess, that she lived in Barberino di Mugello, a village in the upper Val di Sieve, near Scarperia. There is internal evidence. Not only is the poem an admirable burlesque of the Rispetti daily made in those parts, but the hero of it, "povero Vallera sventurato," fetches his images from local sources. For instance—"

Se mi dicessi, quando Sieve è grossa,
—Gettati dentro: i' mi vi getteria.

This is conclusive.

lature, painted grey and white. The result is ugly but decent. There are some Pollajuolesque frescoes on the walls, mild, dextrous, and anæmic. San Domenico, the other church, has nothing



THE PORTA ROMANA, FLORENCE.

whatever within, and without is sadly encumbered by buildings. It has an odd, but successful belfry—a square trunk carrying pinnacles and balls at each corner; out of that a turret with

a cone, and atop of all a brass vane. *Corpus Christi* was at hand; there were great preparations for the feast when I was there: the merriest, haphazardest business of tintacks, tinsel, and turkey-red tassels that ever I saw. I like better the Piedmont custom, which you may see in the Alpine villages between Turin and the Mont Cenis. There they stick the streets with green boughs, and carpet the pavement with

POGGIBONSI.

flowers, to commemorate the sacrament; thus earth is made green and red in honour of earth made Flesh and Blood.

At the *Aquila*, a pleasant country inn, I broke my fast. *Commercianti* kept me company, and roasted the padrona over a dry fire of wit. But she knew her men. This was part of the meal —the relish, without which they could not eat bread. She ran off her list of dishes, with an apparent hopefulness of tone which her looks belied. *Bistecche?* and she waited. "Leave

them to repair the permanent way." *Cotolette di vitello?* "Dio caro, are there no soldiers in Poggibonsi?" There was, in fact, a regiment bivouacked in the Piazza San Domenico. The jokes may have been old, though they were fired off with gusto; for each she had a deprecating grin. *Manzo bollito*, then? She was sure these signori would be pleased. I waited for the outcry; but, by Heaven, they ate it! The whole was a great comedy; and so was it, that one of my friends called for a clove of garlic, and industriously wiped his plate and knife with it before he would suffer his meat to touch either.

My long day ended at Colle, in a rough inn of the lower town. I have been here many times, and in all sorts of weather,—for the place lies at a crossing of four high roads,—but have never failed to be struck by the noble appearance of the upper town—a street of tall palaces, of great gates, and one proud old tower, lining with a double row the spine of rock. Many and many a city has fallen gently to decay; and some ignobly, like Ravenna, and some beautifully, like Ferrara. But Colle has met death with heroism, and so splendid was the craftsmanship which stood her up, that nothing has fallen yet. Only the perishable stuff, the wood, plaster, and mortar, has dropped out: the stone blocks remain immovable; the huge cornices, mortised into place, may still be used against the weather. Sienese by choice, Florentine by fate, below this street of hers of great houses was fought that fight between the rival cities where Provenzano Salvani met his shameful death. It turned on a

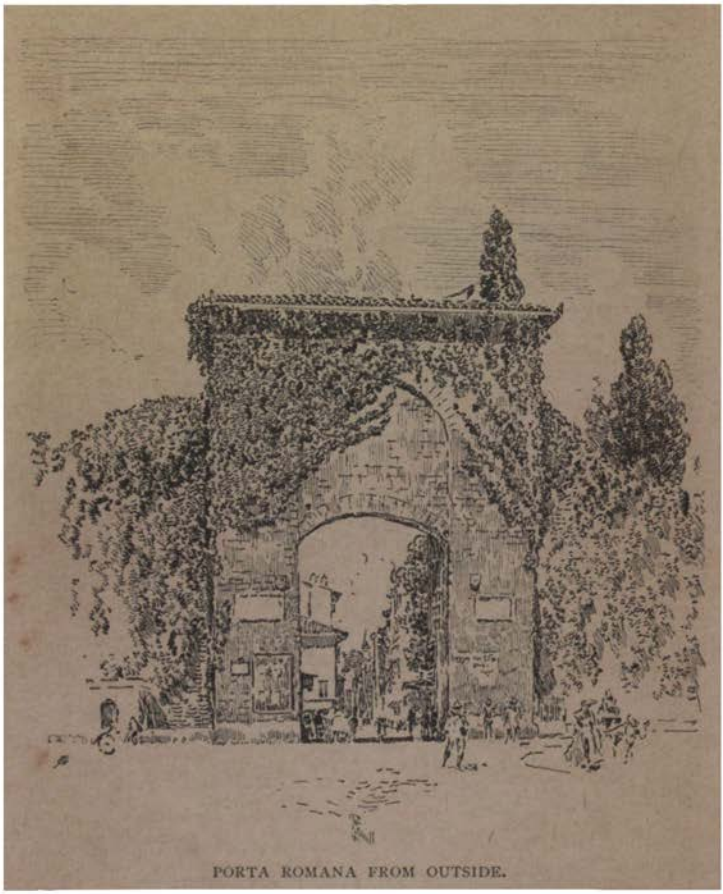
Colle.

comma. There had been a prediction—Villani says it was a wile of the Devil's—whispered in

THE CASTLE OF POGGIBONSI.

Provenzano's ear:—"Anderai e combatterai, vincerai, no morrai alla battaglia, e la tua testa fia la più alta del campo." To this he trusted.

Thou shalt go up and fight, thou shalt prevail, not in battle shalt thou die, and may thy head be highest in the field. Battle was joined in the



PORTA ROMANA FROM OUTSIDE.

valley below; but De Montfort with the Florentines outnumbered the Ghibellines, outflanked them, and drove them back into their trenches. There they stayed, while the others prepared the assault.

And then Cavolino Tolomei, a Sienese exile, enemy of the house of Provenzano, disguised himself and went about the trenches, seeking the captain; whom, when he had found, he followed in and out, and leaping upon him in a lonely place, stabbed him through and through, and cut off his head, and fixed it high on a lance and bore

POGGIO IMPERIALE, FLORENCE.

it off in full sight of the Sienese. And thus was fulfilled that lying prophecy, which had been spoken with this intention,—"Anderai e combatterai, vincerai *no*, morrai alla battaglia, e la tua testa fia la più alta del campo"; *Thou shalt go up and fight, thou shalt prevail not, in battle shalt thou die, and may thy head be highest in the field.* He did not prevail, in battle he died, and his head was high above all others. Then it was that the

Sienese fled and were massacred as they flew; and then also Sapia, that virago of party, who had watched from her tower the havoc of her own countrymen with beastly delight, turned her burning face to God and cried out at Him—"Henceforth I fear Thee no more!" Dante gives her a flick as he passes her.

> Savia non fui, avvegna che Sapia
> Fossi chiamata,

the lady confesses herself. Pier Pettignano saved her by prayer.[1]

[1] He sold combs on the bridge at Pisa, and was a famous *fakir* of Siena.

CHAPTER XX

VOLTERRA TO THE SOUTH: MASSA MARITTIMA

I MUST fetch backwards from this point, and pick up my line at Volterra, whence I pushed on farther into the south part of Tuscany, nor rested until I had touched its uttermost limit at Orbetello.

I consider Semifonte to have been the fairest city in Tuscany, because I have never seen it. Next to that I had been accustomed to place Pomarance, partly because it also I had never seen, partly because of its fragrant name. If it be a habit peculiar to poets to mistake names for things,[1] then I am a poet; for it was impossible for me to suppose that a place called Pomarance could be other than exquisite. Hereby I was betrayed into a fatuity which I shall not attempt to conceal. Instead of going on from Colle to Siena, and from Siena to the south, securing by these means not only a good road but also a sight of San Galgano, what must I needs do but chase this Fata Morgana of a Pomarance? Folly of a fool! The little place, which from a distance seems coloured like a Killarney rose, is a very good

Pomarance.

[1] But is by no means so. The vice is common to politicians, tacticians, and the religious.

sort of town, but only in one sense out of the way. That, it undoubtedly is. For, first of all, you have those dread leagues over chasmy mud to pass—Spicchiaiola, the Monte della Torre, Bevis of Hampton's blood-coloured cliff; then the abhorred climb beneath the walls of Volterra. I saw the place, as vast and inert in the sun as it had been of old in drizzling fog. Again I saw severe maids in felt hats, sickles in girdle; again I felt my hairs on end. Within sight of the fatal gate—at the Garibaldi monument—you turn and go down a sloping road into the valley. And far ahead of you rose-coloured Pomarance, in Emerson's pretty phrase, "sweetly torments us with invitations to its own inaccessible home."

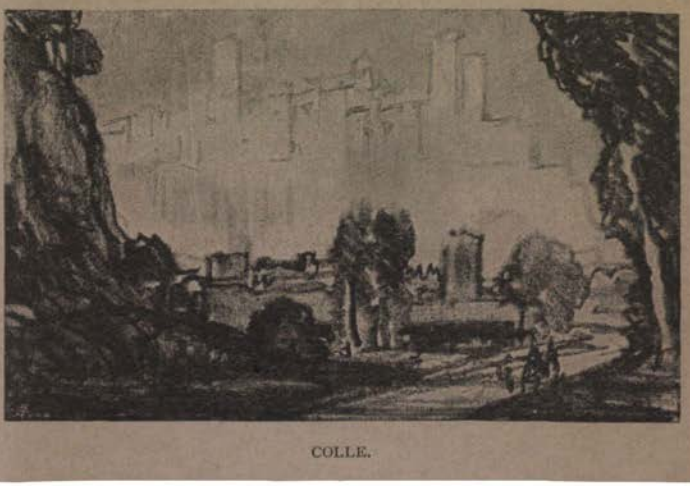
To be perfectly plain, as dull a little town as you may wish to avoid is the Pomarance of practice, but it is set upon a fine brae, and commands a view of others as fine or finer. In particular, the view of Volterra impresses itself upon the memory. Many a city (notably Montepulciano) makes a grander flight into the clouds, but none shows more strength, none seems more charged with fate. The countryside, over which your eye must needs roam, adds to the impressiveness—so vacant, so weather-cursed it is. There is also to be seen, at eight miles' distance, Rocca Sillana, that massive castle alone upon a hill, from whose keep you may survey the whole length and breadth of Tuscany: I speak as a fool, for I have not tested it. Sir Henry Layard certifies as to the length, for he says that your range extends from the Apennines into Umbria. Local report adds a sight of both seas.

After this there is climbing to be done:

> Vassi in Sanleò, e discendesi in Noli;
> Montasi su Bismantova in cacume
> Con esso i piè; ma qui convien ch' uom voli . .

It is much an affair of that sort. You climb a great circular hill-road by cliffs of shining mica; you look across a gorge to a pyramidal rock (the denuded core, doubtless, of a

The way to Massa.



COLLE.

volcano), wooded from base to point, and see atop of it the invariable frontier castle, a warden of the western sea for the prince-bishops of Volterra. Upon the top of the next hill you will have a full view of Lardarello and the boracic acid works—if such you desire—and, more picturesque, of Monte Cerbole, a little round and walled village capping justly its mountain. Its mountain is isolated, set in the middle of a glen; behind it a broad down rises equably to

the sky-line. There is nothing in this eyrie of savages to distinguish it from any other. You may count such places by scores and fifties; withal, they never fail to stir the pulse. An odd thing about them is this, that whereas they are on a much lower level than the Apennine villages, they carry altogether more weight. Fivizzano, for instance, in the Garfagnana, is walled and towered, and fulfils the top of a rock, just as this Monte Cerbole. Yet Monte Cerbole, Roccastrada, Radicofani, and others like them are horrific; Fivizzano, San Marcello, "picturesquely situate," to quote a favourite phrase of Herr Baedeker's. One reason, I take it, may be that these Volterran hills are all volcanic; they are more abrupt; the towns upon them gain value, and seem (as they actually are) more inaccessible than those of the mountainous north. The Apennines make architecture a ridiculous pretence; but among these downs, to continue the sheer of a cliff some fifty or a hundred feet is to achieve something.[1] One more of these savage nests, and I have done with them for the present. Castelnuovo in Val di Cecina is the last of them upon the stage to Massa Marittima; the last of them, and as good as any—a stern, ruddy village, rising in steps up the rock of its foundation, charged to overflowing with tangle-haired women and children, fierce and wild. They herd and clamber about you with yells; or they watch you, bold-eyed, from their doors. Life here is that of one great family. All must have common blood,

[1] In the same way Salisbury Plain makes Stonehenge a foolishness. But imagine those ranked boulders in Hyde Park. They would look monstrously. Salisbury Plain is on far too great a scale.

for there can be none which has not been mingled in the isolation of hundreds of years. Not a door, as I passed, but was wide open; not a window had a pane of glass in it. A huddle of stone byres, I assure you—a life lived here without privacy or the desire of it. Marriage-bed, child-bed, sick-bed, death-bed, and upon each in turn the eyes of whoso pleased to turn them that way. Why not? For all that, some ten paces removed from the last hovel in the street, under a knotty old thorn-tree, I saw a youth courting a maid retired from the rest. She looked down at her fingers restless in her lap; he bent his head to whisper in her ear. One does whisper then in the Tuscan hills! I had imagined one stormed, not wooed, a girl.

Aweary of volcanoes and abrupt, dreary villages, the reader will be as glad as I am to consider a town of pretence. Massa Marittima, when you reach it,—and the ways are long to do that,—will approve itself worthy your sore feet, though the wise Dennis did not think so.[1] It is old, it has a magnificent church, it is on the edge of a plain and a shore peopled thick with memories. Hereby were Populonia, Vetulonia, Ansedonia, Talamone. But hear old Fazio: **Massa Marittima.**

> . . . vedi piana
> Con altri colli la Maremma tutta,
> Dilettevole molto e poco sana.
> Ivi è Massa, Grosseto, e la distrutta

[1] Massa Marittima was one of the few cities of the Maremma which betrayed him out of his urbanity. "A mean, dirty place," says he, "without an inn." He speaks of its "dreary dulness," and prefers the mosquitoes of Follonica. I don't agree with him at all.

Civitàvecchia, ed ivi Populonia
Ch' appena pare, tanto è mal condutta,
Là è ancora dove fu Ansedonia,
Là è la cava dove andar a torme
Si crede i tristi, ovvero le demonia.

Well might the honest man believe that troops of devils rode shrieking through the night. The view of the Maremma which you get from the citadel of Massa shows you a flat plain of unspeakable desolation. In Fazio's day—as in Dennis's—it was thick in a jungle of scrub and brushwood. Dante tells you:

Non han si aspri sterpi nè si folti,
Quelle fiere selvagge che in odio hanno,
Tra Cecina e Corneto i luoghi colti.[1]

To my own mind it looks infinitely more hag-ridden now than any wooded prospect could ever look. However, I must not anticipate what I was destined to see of it in a few days' time. Let me return to Massa Marittima.

The city occupies the western slopes and the top of a long and very steep hill, and consists of one serpentine street which turns upon itself three times before it reaches the citadel. Thus it happens that the back door of the inn is in the first stretch of the spiral, and that to reach the front door you must either ascend some sixty

[1] Dennis says that it was thick with wood when he first saw it in 1847. "The boar, the roebuck, the buffalo, and wild cattle" lurked in it in those days. "Everything was then in a state of primitive nature; a dense wood ran wild over the plain . . . a tall underwood of tamarisk, lentiscus, myrtle, dwarf cork-trees . . . fostered by the heat and moisture into an extravagant luxuriance, and matted together by parasitical plants of various kinds."

There is nothing of this now, of course. The brakes are all cut down, some of the land is under the plough; but the soil is so poor that very little rewards the husbandman.

steps or walk a quarter of a mile. Here and there precipices are to be discovered between the houses, and stepped ways up them, which give short cuts to the stout of heart. But, naturally, such traffic as there is—and there is next to none—must work its way round and round about. In the long course of this one

MASSA MARITTIMA.

street you will discover some fine buildings: a Palazzo del Podestà, a Palazzo Comunale, a really noble church, one of the very best in the south of Tuscany, a Gothic washing-place, and atop of all the Citadel. Ruined palaces there are in abundance, of the true, inscrutable southern kind; Sienese in type, effect, and material—grey stone, namely, plain and heavy, flat-fronted, with a *pian' nobile* of Venetian windows.

In one of these was born the raciest saint in the calendar, and by all accounts the most free-spoken — San Bernardino of Siena, no less a man. I don't think, however, that the Massetani can claim more of him than to have cradled him, and to have given him a mother. His father, Tollo di Dino di Baldo Albizeschi, was a Sienese gentleman of family; Nera di Bernardino di Ranieri Avveduti of Massa was his mother. Orphaned at five years old, he was taken to Siena to live with his aunt of the mother's side, Donna Diana, and only returned to Massa to sell his belongings. One more connection with his birthplace he had. It was a Massetano—Padre Galgano—who in 1402 admitted him into the Franciscan Order. He said his first mass in 1404. A man of extraordinary burning zeal he was, as all the world knows, of native pungency, and of sound political sagacity. He did, indeed, far more than Savonarola, who had no sagacity at all, and really more than Saint Catherine, his countrywoman, who had a great deal. For if she moved the Pope, he moved Christendom, and has moved it ever since. The tale of his invention of the divine monogram may be fable[1]—though I see no reason to suppose it so: that he used it in his mission is entirely true. Its success was as remarkable as his own; since the invention,

A great Massetan birth.

[1] It is very well known. San Bernardino made so many converts by his preaching that he ruined those sort of men and women who live on the vicious. One of these—a maker of dice he was—came to see him, with the grievance that what was fish to the preacher's net was starvation to his. Bernardino thereupon traced out the I.H.S. upon a stone, and bade him make tablets with that upon them instead of his deuce, ace and tray. And so he did.

or introduction, of the rosary there has never been so moving a device. You may say, "A formula the more." I am not at all concerned to deny it. The world was ruled by formulas before J.-J. Rousseau and his friends set about to destroy them; and just as much as he did but substitute new formulas for old ones, so the world is still ruled by them since Jean-Jacques died and was buried. Is not the Cross itself a formula? Nay, have we not been driven to contrive higher formulas yet? And, to put it at its lowest, that is a wise man and a statesman who can found a formula and carry it through. For by such the world has always been wagged, and there seems to be no other way.

If the palaces of Massa recall Siena, the cathedral church of San Cerbone[1] is nearer the great model of Lucca. There is none to approach its grandeur in Siena. It is in shape a severely long and plain basilica, with a triply-arcaded façade, an arcaded side, with a clerestory in black and white bars. It has a lead cupola—which is like Siena—upon an octagon of brick, a square stone belfry with a conical cap of pink brick; and out of this belfry pushes and flourishes a fig-tree. The façade is fantastic but perfectly successful. I have said that there are three arcades of round arches; and it is true. But the uppermost arcade is deeper than the others, and behind it you may discover a true Gothic window with flamboyant tracery. Italy at large has the secret of this composite building

Massa church, without

[1] Dennis, perversely out of touch with this place, calls it "a neat edifice," which it precisely is not. Not Lassels, who applied it to Siena church, made worse choice of an adjective.

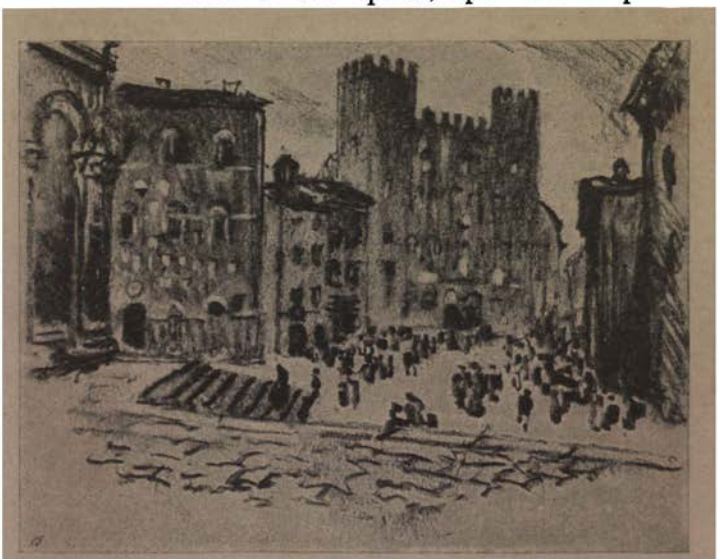
which breaks all the rules and looks beautiful. The colour here is as variegated as a spring parterre—warm pink, French grey, pale lemon yellow, black, lichen-gilt stone. Severity, age, permanence: think of their value in a yeasty little state such as this where parties change as the wind veers, and to-day you embrace Siena, and to-morrow you spring at her throat. Christianity, the Church, the Faith—these three, who then were one, never changed, though Popes raised armies and burned and pillaged like condottieri. All Italy, I say, had the secret of this; but only Tuscany had the great way of doing it. You cannot accuse Ligurian architecture of style; nor Venetian architecture when it takes such forms, for instance, as the Santo of Padua. But Pisa, Lucca, this Massa Marittima —they compel your admiration, partly by effrontery, but mainly by character. And character in a man is style in art.

Inside, this church is still splendid in its old age. Pale old Sienese frescoes—dreamy Madonnas, languishing saints and angels, knights on horseback, hawks and greyhounds—are still on the walls. Even Dennis admired the baptismal font. He says it is made of one block of stone, and very likely it is. At any rate it is large enough to swim or drown in, has a beautiful scroll-work screen of iron round about it, and ancient carvings upon its four sides—semi-Byzantine things, where the waves of Jordan fall like a cope over the Saviour's shoulders; and for its feet lions mangling prostrate lambs. A date, 1267, is upon it. The church itself was built in Bishop Albert's time in 1225. At the

and within.

west end there are also carvings in black basalt: grotesque, dwarfed images of holy persons, earlier in date by the look of them, and not unlike those figures of Roland and Oliver which one remembers at Verona.

The church and palaces of Government are at the second turn of the spiral, upon an outpush-



THE PIAZZA, MASSA MARITTIMA.

ing spur of the hill, called l' Oriolo. Below them is the public fountain — a deep and broad tank under Gothic arches, like Fonte-branda at Siena. To reach the citadel, which was the castle of the bishops when they lorded it here,[1] you must climb the last third of the spiral, to the top of the hill which is called Monte Regio. If you do this you will find what

The citadel—Monte Regio.

[1] See the appendix to this chapter for an outline of Massa's history.

I believe, and Dennis unwillingly admits, to have been the original Etruscan town: Vetulonia or another, all's one now. There is here, to all intents and purposes, a separate town behind walls. A great square tower rises in the midst—the bishop's rock of offence. The walls are built in courses of stone and tufa; but Dennis says—and no doubt he is right—the blocks are not big enough to be Etruscan. There is therefore nothing but tradition to go upon in this matter of Etruscan Massa; but I shall refer you to Dennis, if you don't know him already—a mature old British gentleman, an enthusiast and a great scholar, you will find him. His book is one of the few good ones written about Tuscany.

A great and broad view of the Maremma, misty purple when I saw it, brooding but not unkindly, shows the traveller whither he must tend on the morrow if he wishes to find Grosseto.

APPENDIX

HISTORIES OF MASSA MARITTIMA

There are two histories of this little nation—a political, which is worthless, and a domestic, which is tragic, and might be of the highest instruction. But its only historian—an industrious Dottore Luigi Petrocchi—has heard the drums and trumpets too kindly to have much of an ear left for the groanings of the poor.

Massa was always the seat, and by degrees became the principality of a bishop; and so remained until the first quarter of the thirteenth century, when Bishop Albert, falling heavily into debt, pawned to the Massetani their own liberties and immunities. There was a relapse for a few years, but the

city acted as a full-fledged republic in 1225. Its first outside struggles were with the highland chiefs round about it—notably with the Pannocchieschi, and Aldobrandeschi of Santa Fiora, very notable and puissant ruffians—as to whom Mr. William Heywood has much of interest to report in his *Ensamples of Fra Filippo* (pp. 205 *sqq.*). This was the way of all Tuscan communes. The Massetani prevailed against some of them. In 1232 Ranuccio di Guglielmo and Ildebrandino di Malpollione with their following became citizens *en bloc.* Thus, having sowed peace outside the walls, they had to reap discord within, and were driven into the camp of this or that stronger nation according as the winds blew at home. They leagued with Pisa against Florence, with Florence against Pisa and Castruccio; they sided with Volterra against San Gimignano; they joined the Ghibelline League, the Guelf League; but on the whole they remained loyal to Siena and the Emperor, and, borrowing money from that state, were taken into what was virtually a servitude. In the fall of Siena Massa was involved, and so severe had been the yoke upon them that the Massetani were the first subject-state of the Sienese dominion to submit to Cosimo of Florence. With the weight of his heavy, but fatherly hand upon them, their political history stops short at this point.

But neither Cosimo, who was a just man, nor Francis, who was not unkindly, could help Massa against her real and constant enemy. Long before the Medici rule, long before the Sienese, had reached its harvest, the Maremma had begun to levy tribute. The marshes encroached upon the hill, the jungle rotted year by year. Minotaur that it was, it demanded a yearly tribute of youth, and got it. Repetti shows that in 1428 the population of the city had fallen to 400 lost souls. What it must have been in 1560 one cannot imagine; according to Dr. Petrocchi, in 1737, when Gian Gastone's wig was taken off, there were only 26 poderi in cultivation in all the contado, and no more than 527 persons alive within the walls. The saw ran in that time—

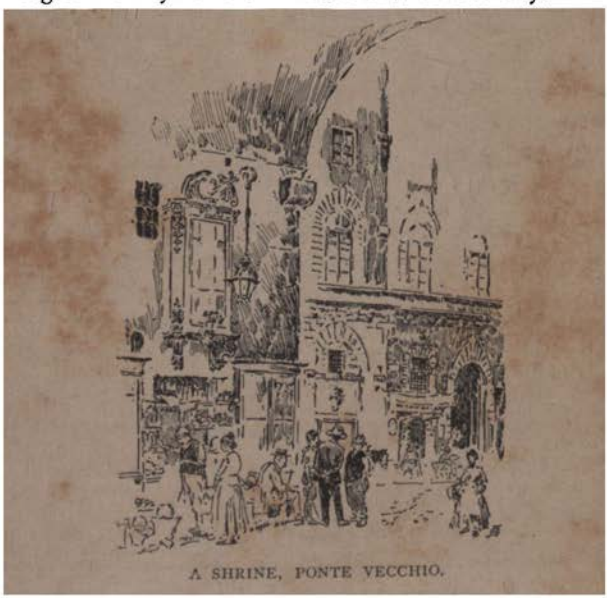
Va' a Massa; guardala e passa.

The Lorrainers finally saved the place, after one false start. Francis III., thinking population was the needful

thing, colonised Massa with 146 families from the Rhine country, 600 souls in all. Land, corn, a yoke of oxen, were given to each household, which was bidden then to thrive and replenish the earth. There seemed to those poor Rhinelanders only one way to do that, which was to die: that they did with extraordinary rapidity. One by one their houses were left empty. They perished utterly: left no descendants, says Repetti. The two Leopolds really brought salvation in by draining the swamps and letting in the hill-torrents. The Ghirlanda bog, the Ronna, the Pozzajone, the Venella were all ditched and emptied; but Leopold II. had to get the horrible lagoon of Piombino pumped before he could cut his drains. And here is Repetti's table of population to speak for the house of Lorraine:—

In 1640 there were	165	families of	586	souls
„ 1745 „	145	„	442	„
„ 1833 „	457	„	2482	„
„ 1839 „	446	„	2840	„

It is these peaceful feats of the Lorrainers that make men still regret the days of the Grand Dukes of Tuscany.



A SHRINE, PONTE VECCHIO.

CHAPTER XXI

GROSSETO AND THE COAST ROAD: ORBETELLO

I HAVE reason to believe that, had I gone from Massa to Follonica, from Follonica to Grosseto, I should have been better justified in heading this chapter as I have. I should have got more sea and more of a coast road; but I should also have got more sand, which seems incredible. For the benefit of the adventurous, however, I say that there is such a road, three times as long as the other, not always carriageable, but giving you Follonica to inspect, and the *pineta* to traverse—both of which I missed. What did I gain? Possibly something in the matter of roads, though it was mighty little, for a three-quarter wind was raging which blew the grit in my face and smothered up the marshes in grey smoke. What else? Nothing, upon my honour, but a few hours more in Grosseto, and a nearer view of the Maremma Grossetana. This did not strike me, though it was forlorn enough, as being so arid as the Pisan marshes; and certainly it held none of the sinister menace of the Volterran wilderness. It is cut up, as the Lincolnshire Fens are, into large fields with

Choice of roads.

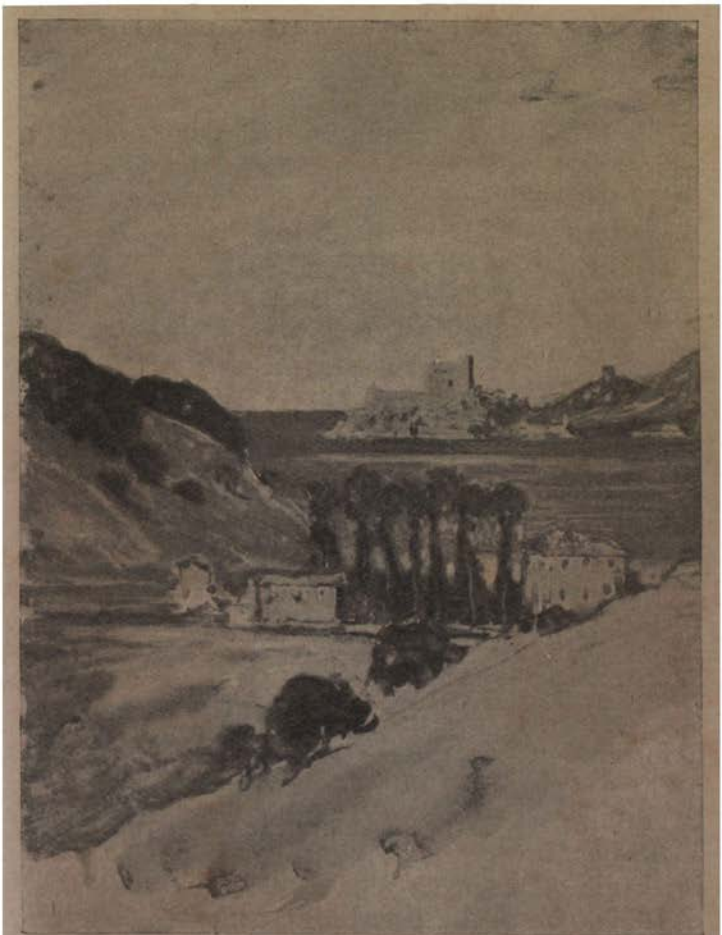
grass dykes and ditches between them. A certain amount of land is under the plough; cattle and sheep feed some off; a good deal of grass had been put up for hay, which was being carried when I was there — on the 24th of May. No doubt it is infected land: there are no villages anywhere in sight, and such tenements as there are — railway stations and the like — have wire gauze over the windows. The mosquito's bite, they say now, is death. It may have been a mosquito that killed young Pia de' Tolomei, whose life and death the critics are denying with one accord. They rave.[1] There is a range of low hills — the Monti d' Alma — which you must cross, driving my way to Grosseto. La Pia's prison stood just at the foot of these, facing north. The Castello di Pietra it is called; but it lay far from my road, with none of its own, so I never saw it. Here in these swamps, amid standing pools and tangled brakes, sterile breadths of reed, out of sight or call of man, she, than whom Siena had made nothing more fair, grew hollow-cheeked and filmy-eyed, and very ready for Death when he had pity upon her. Beautiful, poignant, slim figure of a young girl, carved immortal in one line:—

Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma.

It is after passing these hills that the Grossetan Maremma, strictly speaking, begins. It is not near so wide as ours in Lincolnshire, for you are

[1] This is one of those fruitless, empty exercises so much in vogue at the present. Francesca's age, La Pia's marriages, Beatrice's substance: how in the name of Wonder can such things matter? Dante, the author (as far as we are concerned) of their being, has provided for all these things. I adhere to Keats' dictum in these matters.

never out of sight of the hills; but it is excessively miserable. I think we scarcely passed more than



NEAR ORBETELLO.

one substantial house: the rest were hovels. One such I do remember—Monte Pescali by

name, a villa of pretence, standing, cypress-girt, upon a little hill, with a carriage-drive, flower-beds, and many statues gleaming in groves of ilex and myrtle. A *palazzo* it was called by a little boy of whom I inquired its name. After this, enormous plains opened on either hand, some broken up, some left fallow, in which the great dun cattle stood motionless, each apart from other, staring into space. Whether

Grosseto.

THE FERRY ROAD TO ORBETELLO.

they were wild or tame I know not: they were a forbidding spectacle. At last, half-hidden in a clump of trees, I descried Grosseto, and was thankful.

It has prosperity, it has many industries, a brisk air of business, a first-rate inn—the Stella d' Italia, one of the best in Tuscany[1]—but it has

[1] Here Dennis agrees with my ruling. He lays it down as the best inn between Pisa and Rome. I would go further, and say that I only know one to approach it between Genoa and Rome—the Croce di Malta at Spezzia. But inns have their traditions. From what Dennis says, the excellence of the Stella d' Italia goes with the good-will of the house.

lost the picturesque. It has rebuilt its Palazzo Comunale in the most modern antique. I hardly remember a villa on the Riviera as its parallel. Harsh red brick, pointed to death with white plaster; thin, exaggerated battlements which could not withstand a boy's catapult; painted mouldings—but enough. The Cathedral is no better. An extremely ancient site, a finely severe shape, once of striped marble (of which some few bars remain), it has been coated in and out with plaster, and painted in stripes of red and yellow. These mimic the hue but not the tone, nor of course the quality, of the marbles which lie underneath all this rubbish, awaiting the general resurrection.[1]

Leaving Grosseto, your road is never far from the sea, and at Orbetello, as it seems, takes you bodily into it. For a small portion of your course, a range of low limestone hills lies between you and it: the Monti dell' Uccellina is the name of them, at whose southern extremity you behold Talamone standing in the

To Orbetello: Talamone.

[1] There is little or nothing to be said here of the history of Grosseto. The Counts of Sovana (Aldobrandeschi) had it under the Emperor, and sub-enfeoffed a kinsman, whose descendants held it until the thirteenth century. In 1224 the Sienese sacked and possessed themselves of it; save for a very few years from the death of Frederick II. to the morrow of Montaperto, when there was a republic of Grosseto under Grossetan consuls it depended upon Siena, and with that city fell to Cosimo. The real history, as in Massa's case, began with the tussle of the Grand Dukes and the Marshes. The first three Medici did much, the remainder let all go to ruin; so the Lorrainers had to begin again. What the two Leopolds accomplished in the banking of the Ombrone and *Val ring* of the accursed Pescaja of Castiglione, may be read at large in Repetti (*s.v.*); and fine reading it is for those who see in this kind of warfare the real heroism which it involves. Here are his figures:

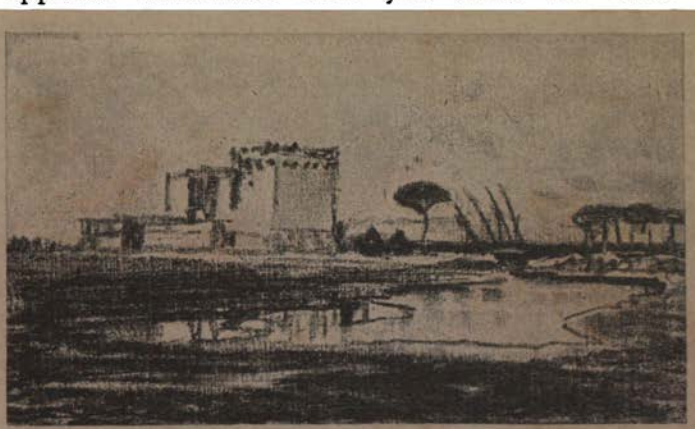
In 1640 there were	238	families of	1340	souls.	
,, 1745	,,	212	,,	648	,,
,, 1833	,,	452	,,	2321	,,

water—a heap of pale ruin. Here was the place where Telamon the companion of Jason upon the Argo may or may not have set up his rest; what is certain is that the Sienese, among many crack-brained projects, had one of making it their Leghorn. Sapia, sending messages by Dante from her toilsome way up the Hill of Purgation to her kinsfolk upon earth, tells him where to look for them.

> Tu li vedrai (she says) tra quella gente vana
> Che spera in Talamone, e perderagli
> Più di speranza che a trovar la Diana;
> Ma più vi metteranno gli ammiragli.

Bitter scorn, all this:—"You will find them among that windy folk who trust in Talamone, and will lose more good hope there than in digging for Diana—and their admirals will lose yet more." The Diana was that supposed underground river for which the Sienese were always groping under their hill; but even that was a more hopeful scheme than to deepen the Ombrone and cut a navigable waterway from Siena to it, and from it to Talamone. The houses that huddle there were once called a city; the broken mole once made a haven. A few poor fevered wretches linger there now; and the bay is so choked with silt and weed that, according to Dennis, there is scarcely water enough to float a coasting steamer in. You cross a couple of creeks by ferry-boats—one before Talamone, one after it. The second of them is the Albegna, and marks what was the southern extremity of Tuscany until the Congress of Vienna in 1814. A little fortress on the further bank is testimony of that. For Orbetello and that delta of land

between the Albegna and the Fiora formed the Presidij—the last garrison of the Empire in Italy. Not all the Medici strength in Cosimo I., nor any of their guile in his successors, could get that away from the Kings of Spain, or of Naples, their successors in this inheritance. However, it was Tuscan for more than half a century, though there is little enough show of it there now. From opposite Talamone until you cross the draw-



THE FRONTIER FORT IN THE MAREMMA.

bridge, by which alone access is possible, you see it beyond you, lying as it seems in the sea; behind it rises the Monte Argentario, a rocky, green-clad island of two peaks. On the further promontory of the mainland lay—and there still lies ruined—Ansedonia, a great Etruscan city. Orbetello, in fact, lies upon a sandy isthmus connecting Italy with Monte Argentario. What once was sea on either hand has been enclosed by the action of wind and tide into two lagoons.[1]

[1] There are therefore three isthmuses, so to speak. Orbetello stands

Strange, amphibian little place that it is—half fortress, half fishing village. It had great strength once—so much is evident in its double line of defence, the ports and antiports. Traces of the Spanish occupancy are not awanting. Fountains, statues, obelisks, carry the castles and lions upon escutcheons, and pompous ascriptions to Carlos and Philip and Ferdinand below them. There is a certain excess of plaster-magnificence in building which is unlike Tuscany. Audacity was a mark of the Cinquecento, tawdry luxuriance of the Seicento; but to swagger and strut in plaster was never a Tuscan foible. It may be coincidence, or it may be an evidence of blood, but it is the fact that in the poor, pretentious church of this town the altars are adorned with dolls in glass cases exactly as you find them in Spain. I did not remark any pronounced Spanish type in the inhabitants: nobody was superbly idle enough, nobody stared at me as if I were at once curious and beneath contempt, nobody was to be seen chasing a woman as if she were his natural prey; many wore rags, but none as if they were a mantle-royal. No: the Orbetellani were as busy, playful, hungry and patient, as fond of their children and little dogs, as decorous without care to be so, as apt to display and as deprived of the means to do it, as any of their lovable kindreds on the mainland. It may be true that their Toscanity dates but from the nineteenth century; they had been Tuscans aforetime without knowing it.

Orbetello.

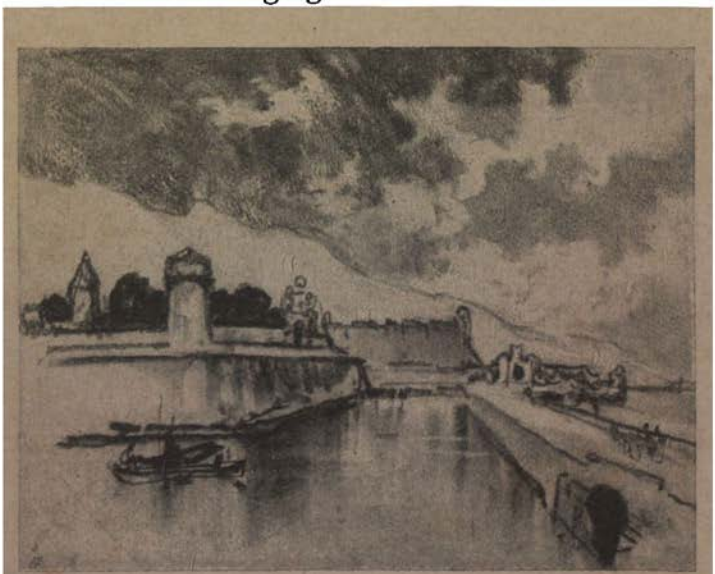
upon the first formed of them. The others were no doubt made by the same agents as had made the first.

They say that the two salt-water lagoons are unwholesome, and I daresay they are. They are blue, however, and laugh as innumerably as ever the waves of the Ægean; and they are full of large fish. In the creeks and inlets are many little flat-bottomed boats wherein to adventure them. Dennis says that the fishing is done by

ORBETELLO.

night, with torches and spears. They "burn the water," in fact. I did not see any such thing; but an old man, whose acquaintance I made over a pipe, told me that a good deal was net-work. Lines they had, and stake-nets. He said that the fish were poor eating, and the bigger they were the poorer they were. The little ones, however, were excellent—a kind of whitebait. He showed me portions of the old walls: *roba*

antichissima, he said, *roba etrusca*. And then, pointing his hand southwards to a headland, "See," said he, "the ancient city of Ansedonia: a wonderful place, by all accounts." It was like a misty blot in the blue—little or nothing to be seen. I asked him about Orbetello: he confessed it a miserable lodging. The winds cut it all to



ORBETELLO.

pieces in the winter, and the sea very often broke through the sandy bar. In the summer it was full of fever. By talking about it he seemed to become suddenly aware of its ill-fortune. He looked wildly about him, then at me. "Chè brutto paese!" he said, "cursed by the water, cursed by the land!" He nodded his head: "Brutto! brutto paese!" He lived there, he

added, because he had been born there. He was a fisherman: out yonder—he pointed across the lagoon to a reed-encumbered strip—were his nets.

In the public gardens I saw palm trees and women with children; and I conversed with the gardener. He knew his business, I found out, though it is none of our business who garden at home; for he saw me pulling snails off his carnations and seemed to wonder what I was about. But he showed me feats of his which were beyond my powers: cannas and cactuses, to wit, growing like weeds in the open. His carnations would have been excellent if the snails had not been more excellent; his roses, which he succeeded in growing under trees, were by no means bad; his stocks grew like saplings; his verbenas and phloxes were flowering shrubs. In lilies I think I could have beaten him; he could not grow delphiniums —I could only pity his attempt towards it; his bamboos, as he admitted, were vexed by the salt-gales. He knew not the name of hollyhock. We sized each other up, boasted of what we could and extenuated what we must. He presented me with a nosegay; we parted on very good terms, he to his watering, I to the garlicky inn and a night with the *fauna* of Orbetello. It is a poor and dull little town, in sooth. I can only promise the traveller such comfort as may accrue from lying in mid-lagoon between Ansedonia and Talamone, cities of Etruria. For the rest, he will be capered over by fleas, and will toss under the shadow of mosquitoes' wings. There is little else. Orbetello is a name of some pretence; it has few diversions and a bad inn—and there's no more to say.

CHAPTER XXII

ACROSS COUNTRY—GROSSETO TO SIENA

A tale of my landlord.

To the landlord of the Stella d' Italia at Grosseto I owe many things—cool and sun-guarded chambers, wine and pasta of the best, a sunk marble bath and abundance of water, the sight of his hairless dog, and the attendance of his handsome serving-maid; but for one thing I cannot praise him. As a guide to the roads of his country he is not only incompetent, but believes himself the contrary. Of the three ways from Grosseto to Siena—one good, one bad, one impossible—he stoutly recommended the last.[1] He said that he himself always used it, that it was shorter than the others by some eighteen miles, that it had *poca salita* and little dust, that it was in excellent repair. In short, it was madness to go by any other.

[1] The high-road, which is (for Southern Tuscany) excellent, goes by Monte Pescali, Roccastrada and Chiusdino, the two last being fine hill-towns—Roccastra la one of the very finest. I have only seen it from a distance. Close to Chiusdino is the ruined Cistercian abbey of San Galgano—the model (never approached) of Gothic building in all the Sienese dominion. An alternative road is to follow that by which I was induced to adventure as far as Paganico, thence to Montalcino and Buonconvento. Here you join the Via Romana, and have a good level course to the gate of Siena. Montalcino is the great attraction of this road. Mine gave me little but a fired brake and an appetite.

The truth is that it is the route of the crows when they wish to go to Siena; it is a dead straight;

ROCCASTRADA.

over hill over dale, thorough bush thorough briar. It is not to be mistook; for when you see a

mountain before you, you know you must scale it, and when an abyss yawns, you know you must leap down. There is no dust, it is true, for most of it is at the height where super-terrestrial winds rage from one peak to another; but it is furrowed by the channels of winter torrents. It is not graded, not engineered in any way. It is, as I say, a track marked out by the droppings of crows as they wing a flight to the North from the pickings of dead cattle in the Maremma. Possibly the shepherds of the Garfagnana use it, as they feed their way to their own mountain pastures in the summer—it is nothing to them, to the crags upon which they perch, or the zigzag paths over which they go barefoot. But to Florentine horses, or automobiles of France, it is a deadly enterprise.

Your few gains may be counted on the fingers of your right hand: a derelict mountain village or two, a view of Roccastrada upon your left hand and of Montalcino on your right—Montalcino and that great range of hills, Monte Amiata, Monte Labbro, Monte Civitella, and the rest, which divide the Ombrone from the Orcia. This, of course, is something; and something is the woodland nature of the road. These hills—for you cross the chain upon which Roccastrada stands—are densely wooded, and their only denizens are charcoal-burners, their dogs and their cattle; and the only buildings their squat kilns. I don't forget Paganico—that is great gain, nor the view of Siena. To those only I address myself.

From Grosseto to Batignano the road presents the usual features of the Maremma Grossetana—

of which I, for one, have had more than enough. It passes nearly, but does not discover, the site of the Etruscan city of Rusellæ;[1] Batignano itself, a cheerless little rock village of grey and russet, is the only haunt of men in all this region. Then, after an up and down woodland road, very English, being mostly grown with oak and hornbeam, you see in front of you Paganico—that, too, like an English walled hamlet—red brick with a red church and square tower, not unlike Old Basing in Hants, with ivied walls of defence broken in many places. It stands upon a ridge of the land, and in the valley below it the Ombrone runs between woody banks, crisply over a pebble beach, and takes to itself a brook called Gretano. But the Ombrone is by no means like an English river; its colour is peacock-green, its wave is semi-opaque, and its winter course too furious for our level and comfortable land.

Paganico.

Nor is Paganico English by any means the moment you are within the great gateway, which still stands, with its fellow at the other end of the street. It is built a square—about the size, let us say, of the Piazza Annunziata at Florence—within double walls, and has been arcaded all round in its days of prosperity. The houses are tumbling this way and that, there is hardly a window with unbroken glass. The pavements—for the whole was once paved—have been broken up, weeds alone flourish at Paganico; there are no shops, no signs of wheeled traffic, very few

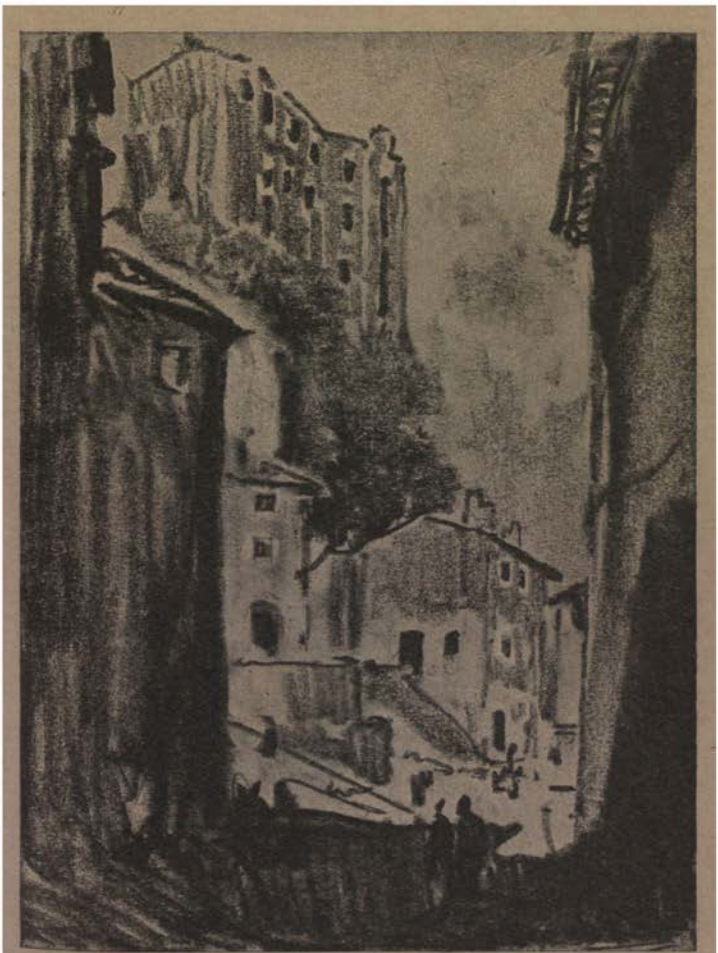
[1] The intrepid Dennis fought his way to Rusellæ through a jungle so dense that he had to cut it with bill and axe. It is on the steep wooded hill of Moscona, some two miles off the road on the right.

people, and, worst sign of all in Tuscany, very few children. One prosperous house in the whole place could I see—a whitewashed house with a wall of its own and an iron gate, through which I made out a flowery terrace and some orange-trees in tubs.

These are signs that Paganico has fallen on evil days, that it has known greater. Some one of the Pannocchieschi clan had it under Sienese suzerainty; a shield of their arms is still to be seen outside the church; but its position made it important. It was fortified by the Frati Umiliati, —a warlike body of religious, chamberlains, *ex officio*, of Siena—and many times besieged, once by Castruccio himself.[1] Then, when the Medici had it, it was created a Marquessate for Don Antonio, called by that name—I mean the lad whom Bianca Capello, a barren wife, bought in the Via del Fosso. Other Marquesses—the Patrizii of Siena, a great family—it knew. But now they are as dead as Adonais, and very soon Paganico will mingle dust with them. Last of it to go, I predict, will be the church, a sturdy, squared rectangle of brick, with the English tower aforesaid. That this has been a

[1] It was in 1328, the last year of his life, and as busy as any. He had subdued a rising in Pisa in the spring of the year; he stayed a serious attack of the Florentines upon Pistoja in September, whereof he died. But in August he had dashed out southward to assist the Pannocchieschi snatch Monte Massi in the Maremma from the Sienese; Paganico lay in his road,—which was mine the other day,—so he raised his engines of war about it and very shortly had it at his discretion. He succeeded also at Monte Massi, but being called off suddenly to Pistoja, was forced to leave it. The Sienese, helped by Florence, had it again after a brisk assault, and were highly elated at their success. That fine equestrian figure painted in the Palazzo Pubblico—Guido Riccio of Modena upon a much-housed horse—commemorates the exploit. See the Appendix to this chapter for the death of Castruccio.

well-adorned place in days long past and over,



ROCCASTRADA.

may be due to a miraculous crucifix which still hangs there behind a curtain, and has done

wonders among the people within the last thirty years, as various tablets record. "Most ancient, most venerable is the image of the Crucified carved in wood, which is adored in the parish church of Paganico, and can be traced there into the thirteenth century"; so says the severe Repetti with unwonted warmth. He adds that there are about its altar pictures by Taddeo di Bartolo, which I confess I didn't see there. I saw a pretty Benvenuto di Giovanni over the west door, and a whole chapelful of Lorenzettesque frescoes in the choir—*Nativity*, *Epiphany*, *Weighing of Souls*, *Last Judgment*—with no particular merit but their seriousness and mellow aspect to recommend them. Other pictures were there, *seicento*, but not impossibly so; sober, dark, and academic pieces they appeared—none of your pink mammoths and blue-flounced angels, of the sort Pocetti set shrieking at you in Florence. Lastly, on a lunette outside a north door, there do remain the vestiges of a beautiful thing, of the Simone Memmi school: a tall fair Virgin holding up an overgrown Bimbo, Saint John Baptist and an angel in attendance—the whole swaying together, sweet and graceful, coloured warm orange, crimson, and green.

While we saw the sights of Paganico, the Pagani saw us and our equipage, and marvelled greatly. The whole population of some fifty souls—I take it some were afield cutting clover—stood about the carriage. A pleasant and friendly race they were, entirely cut off from any such world as we moved in, yet entirely contented. They were very thin, very unclothed, and as brown as nuts. The women wore the hats of

Siena, those halos of lemon-coloured straw than which no head-gear in the world is more becoming to a pretty girl, nor any more disastrous to a plain one.

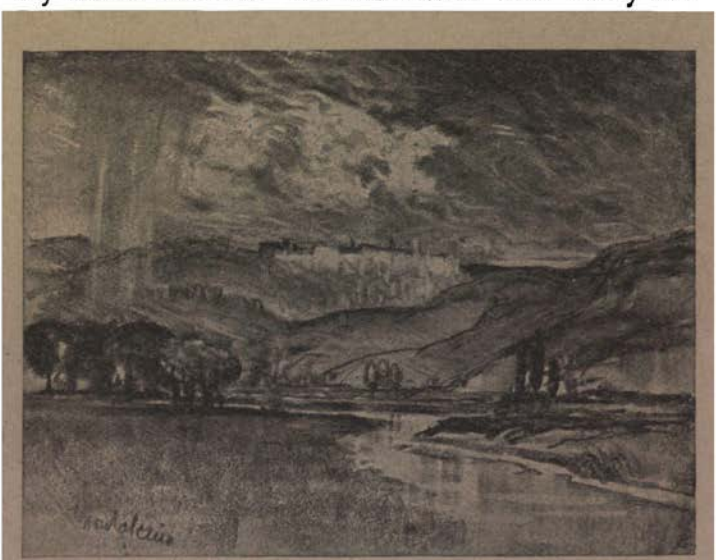
The road is still long and inconceivably toilsome to Siena, leading through a spacious upland country, mainly through woods, but with clear-

WALLS OF SIENA.

ings here and there which show you the deep Val d' Orcia and the grey hills beyond. From the summit of L' Imposta, indeed, you have a view on either hand; on the right Montalcino to the far north-east, a dark red fringe to the mountain, then the whole range of Monte Amiata with clouded crown; on the other hand, where the country rises and falls more gently, Civitella is to be seen,

L' Imposta, Petriolo, Siena.

a little warm town with a single tower, and, almost on the sky-line, a clump of building on a height which I believe was Roccastrada. After L' Imposta comes a gentle fall, then a long and winding climb through ilex woods, and a terrific descent into the gorge of the Farma, which made my brake red-hot. At the foot of this really im-



MONTALCINO.

possible hill are the swift green river, a steep bridge, a ruined fortress in a green wood, and a sulphur spring gushing white vapour from the rocks. This is Petriolo, once a famous bath, where Pope Pius II. was wont to dip his anointed person.[1] I gather that it is still used during the summer,

[1] Montaigne, most diligent in hunting out medicated baths in Italy, missed Petriolo. He tried two in the Sienese country—Vignone, near San Quirico, and Naviso by Montefiascone.

though I did not see the bath itself. There was an inn, however, where (an old woman told me) I could have lived like a *signorone* for three *liras* a day.

At this point you are eighteen miles from Siena, and may begin to look out for the frontier fortresses. There are many of them perched about upon the hill-sides and ridges,—San Lorenzo, Stigliano, Fitello, and others,—but it is nine miles more before you see the city. Then you pass a village on a common, and just beyond that have a magnificent apparition of the mountain's flushed crown: Siena herself, carmine and white, upon her own three-capped hill. No town makes so splendid a show as this one; no hill-town in all Tuscany, nor any city in all Italy. The Zebra tower gleams like an agate, the Mangia tower is like a red lily. Splendid from any side—to be seen from twenty miles' distance on the approach from Rome—I think this is the best view of all. The hill is so green and the city so rosy; you look upon it from an almost equal height; it seems to be sailing in the cloud. But to reach the walls you have much still to do; you must descend far into the gorge, and get up again by long circuits to the Gate of St. Mark. Thence your way is through streets of red palaces—empty streets, very silent—to the Piazza Tolomei and good fare at the Albergo La Toscana, which once housed a Tolomei chief.

APPENDIX

THE DEATH AND BURIAL OF CASTRUCCIO CASTRACANE

Since my last mention of this hero is to be here, here is as good a place as any to report his death. It was in 1328, as has been said above, at the close of a year of great business. John Villani tells the story—so well that it cannot be bettered. Let him speak for me, therefore.

"Now when Castruccio had got back Pistoja by his profound science, and care, and prowess, in the manner which we have related already, he regarrisoned and replenished the place with men and stores, and put the Ghibellines into it again; and returned to his city of Lucca with glory and honour after the fashion of an emperor in triumph; and found himself at a very height of renown and respect, such as no lord or tyrant of Italy had obtained for three hundred years or more —as the chronicle will bear out; and, moreover, lord of the cities of Pisa and Lucca, of Pistoja and the Lunigiana, of a great part of the Genoese shore, and of more than three hundred walled towns. And then, as it pleased God, who, for the debt we owe to Nature, draws in the big with the little, and the rich with the poor, he—through excess of undue fatigues undertaken with his host at Pistoja (as standing armed at all times, now riding, now afoot, setting the guards and relieving the pickets of his force, overseeing the siege engines, cutting the trenches, ah, and working at them with his own hands lest any one should say, Catch him working in the dog-days)—he, I say, was taken with a chronic fever, whereof he sickened and fell very ill. And, in truth, more than enough good men of his, when they left Pistoja, sickened and died. Among other notables there was Master Galeasso de' Visconti of Milan, who was in Castruccio's service, but had been a great lord and tyrant on his own account before the Bavarian deprived him of his estate—lord of Milan he had been, and of Pavia, Lodi, Cremona, Como, Bergamo, Novara, and Vercelli; and he died a wretched death, a soldier in Castruccio's pay. And this showeth that a man may stretch the sentences of God, but not overpass them.

"Now Castruccio, before he fell sick, remembering that the Bavarian was on his way back from Rome, and would be offended with him for having upset his emprise of that realm, by staying in Tuscany, and by resuming the city of Pisa into his dominions against leave and authority, was afraid of what he might do—even that he might deprive him of his signiory and estate just as he had deprived Galeasso of Milan; and he was about to go to work for a secret treaty of agreement with the Florentines, when, as it pleased God, his sickness overtook him, and there he lay; and, growing worse, established his last will, leaving Henry his eldest son Duke of Lucca, and directing, that as soon as he should be gone, without any days of mourning, this Henry should post to Pisa with his cavalry and overrun the city, and so keep his authority alive; and this done he departed this life, on Saturday, the third of September 1328. In person this Castruccio was very limber, and tall, and of a great appearance, bluntish looking, not fat, fair and inclined to be pale, with straight yellow hair about a comely face. In age when he died he was forty-seven years. And a little before his death, when he knew it was upon him, he said to his closest friends: 'Here I lie a-dying; and when I am dead you'll see the web unravelled'—which was his Lucchese way of saying, You will see revolution, or, You will see my world depart. And he prophesied justly, as you will presently see. And, as we now know from his nearest kindred, he confessed himself, and took the sacrament decently, and had the holy oil; but he remained in his great error, never admitting that he had sinned against God by the wounds he had dealt to His holy Church, soothing his conscience with the belief that he had acted rightly for the good of the Empire and his own State. So he departed, and they kept his death a secret until the 10th September; and as he had left it to be done, so did his son Henry with his knights overrun the cities of Pisa and Lucca, and broke up assemblies of the Pisans wherever he found them. Which done he went back to Lucca and performed the dule, clothing all his people in black, and with ten horses to draw the bier, covered with silken housings and with ten flags—with the arms of the Empire two, with those of his duchy two, with his own two, and one for Pisa, one for Lucca, one each for Pistoja and Luni. So

they buried him with great honour in Lucca, in the place of the Friars Minor of Saint Francis, on the 14th September. This Castruccio had been an intrepid and magnanimous tyrant, wise and wary, anxious and laborious, expert in arms, provident in warfare, highly adventurous in his undertakings, highly feared and respected; in his days he did some fine and notable feats, and proved a very scourge to his countrymen, to the Florentines, Pisans, Pistojese, and to all the Tuscan nations in those fifteen years of his lordship over Lucca. He was cruel in that he dealt death and torture to men, thankless for the services he got in his need, desirous ever for new friends and for dependants, very proud of his estate and dominion, and above all things in the world desired to be lord of Florence and a king in Tuscany. And the Florentines rejoiced and hugged themselves at his death, scarcely able to believe that dead indeed he was."—(Gio. Vill. 10. 86).

ON THE MUGNONE, FLORENCE.

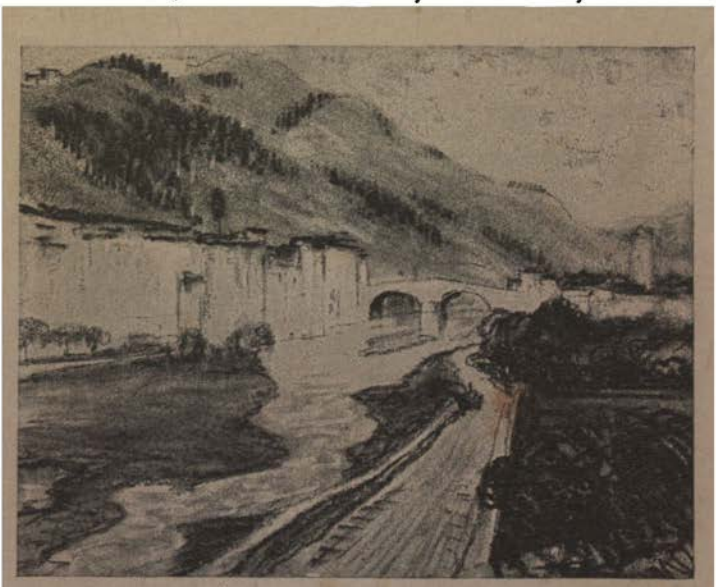
CHAPTER XXIII

SIENA

I NAME the two cities of Tuscany in which it is pleasant to live to be Lucca and Siena; and they are the only two which have reckoned up pleasure among the assets of life. And I say that there are two cities in Tuscany which excel all the others in beauty, and whose beauty consists mainly in elegance; and that these are Lucca and Siena. And lastly I say that, of any two Tuscan cities which one could pick out as alike in the quantity of their charm, it would be impossible to find two more dissimilar in the quality of it than this chosen pair. For one is impossible to be hid, the other most difficult to find. One flaunts it on the top of a mountain, the other nestles darkling in a thicket. And as for the people, if the Lucchese are the salt of the earth, the Sienese are the mustard. The Lucchese have prospered quietly, the Sienese have blusterously failed. And yet, with all their recluse ways, you cannot walk the streets of Lucca without seeing signs of great and forcible character; and flamboyant, preposterous, absurd as the Sienese have been and

Siena and Lucca compared.

still are, it is not possible to affirm that any one thing they have said or done is unworthy of great blood, or a proof of ignoble desire. If—and here is another likeness in diversity—if the Lucchese have left a name in history, it is because they have never tried to make one; if the Sienese, it is because they have always failed.



NEAR SIENA.

Over and over again they have bid for a starry crown; but above that of all the Tuscan nations their history is futile, stultifying, and outrageous. They have no literature, no Dante, no Sacchetti; no science, no Galileo; no great art, no Giotto, no Michael Angelo; no Castruccio, no Farinata, no Medici, no Machiavelli. What Florence was able to do had been clean impossible for Siena,

which started earlier on the race and had the greater advantage. Money she had; but foresight, power, magnanimity, longanimity were wanting in Siena. These things, which are testimonies and fruits of character, abounded in Florence: Siena had none of them. And yet a walk down one street of the

Siena and Florence.

PIAZZA SAN DOMENICO, SIENA.

place will reveal to you finer, rarer, more poignant, more salient character than a whole month of prying into the untouched corners of Florence; and so you will find it if you walk back along the great alley—Shakespeare's "primrose path"—and compare the Sienese whom you meet with the Florentines. Sienese history is bafflingly absurd, but it touches the heart, which Florentine

history seldom does. And thus you may state the difference: you must esteem but cannot love a Florentine, you must love but can hardly esteem a Sienese. I defy that erring wight, the man of sensibility and ardent associations, not to be the Des-Grieux of this good-for-nothing, flaming, dear, wheedling Manon of a nation, whose beauties of mind and person may be, as Mr. Ruskin used to say, parasitic, but for all that are piercingly present.

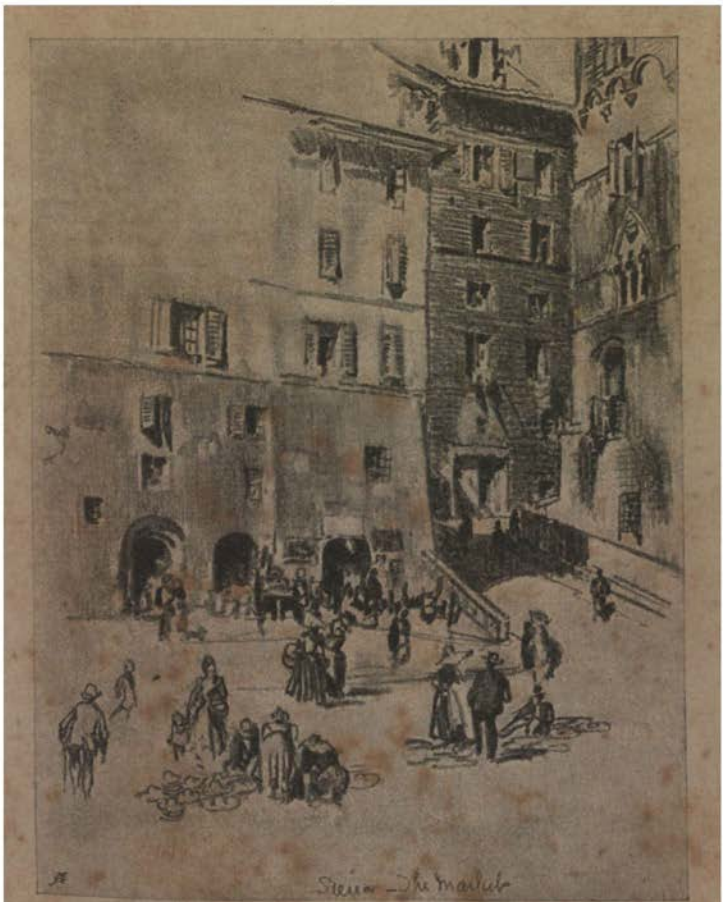
Mystery, pathos, romance are her properties; and very likely they may prove but funguses when you try to set them up for absolutes, and make the poor, pretty things pose as the Sublime and the Beautiful. I am sure I dón't know; but I do know what it is which stirs the pulse of every sojourner in Siena's desolate places—the blend of the tragic and the trivial. The savage, gaunt, great houses, incurably noble, and the lovely and frivolous people within them; the mystical, gilded art which lays a finger on its lip, and shuts up—nothing; the memories of her saints, the fragrance of their names and dust: I know that these things are desperately romantic. I know that the city cries and wails in my ears. Tragic, dauntless, high-flying race! What was said of the Celts by a Celt of old time is true of Siena, and over-true. *They went forth to war, but they always fell.* So did the Sienese—always.

The properties of Siena.

They lost, as they must needs, in the long tussle with Florence; they dedicated themselves to their suzerain, the Madonna, and were four times heard; but she forsook them at the fifth, in their hour of extremity.

Tragedy.

They conquered the seaboard, but never put to sea: Talamone, lonely and weed-choked, if it



THE MARKET, SIENA.

were theirs, was of no use. They began the greatest church in Italy, and finished no more than one quarter of it; their only good artist—

and he was Michael Angelo's master—made for them his noblest work; but they broke it, or let it be broke; and one must go to Bologna now to study Della Quercia.[1] Their painters' work, which (if we are to credit Mr. L. Douglas, as I think we are not) began upon a scale unattainable by Giotto, dwindled off into a school of trite copyists and shallow chiaroscurists, betrayed by Pinturicchio, the driest of the Umbrians, and Sodoma, the emptiest scholar Lionardo ever tried to fill. For grace and beauty the Sienese women have been famous, and are famous still. They are meet to be loved—but who dare love them? Quick and proud, high-spirited and vivacious, luxurious, idle, and superb at once, they are inconstant lovers, and in the old days were even so. They fought like Lapiths on the walls when Marignano and his Spaniards held that last grim leaguer of a year and a half; but when the capitulation was signed they threw themselves into their enemies' arms, and welcomed the slayers of their kin with carpets in the windows and flowers for their feet.

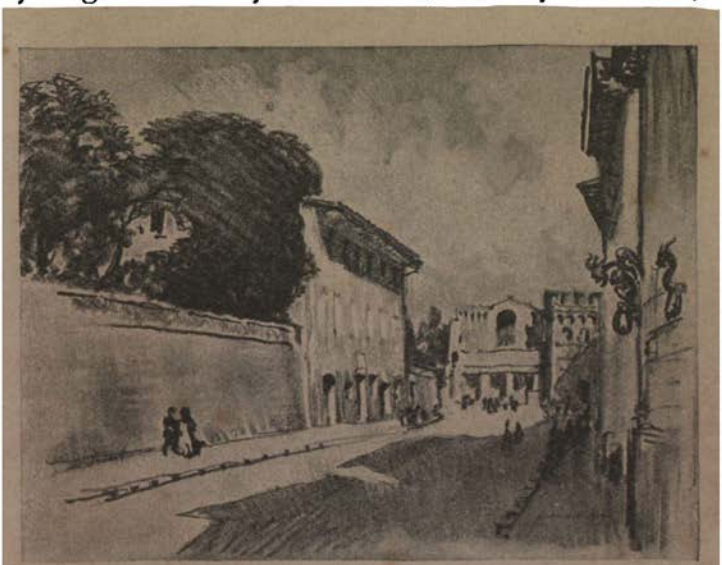
> Or fu giammai
> Gente si vana com' è la sanese?

cries the keen, great Florentine, scorning this chivalrous, feather-headed, mettlesome brood. And well he might, being of whom he was—of the conquering race. For this people went forth to war, but they always fell.

It is not the least of Dante's credentials by any means, this lightning glance of his at

[1] I refer to the Fonte Gaja, ruins of which may be seen in the Opera del Duomo, and a dead copy on the original site in the Campo.

Siena; nor is it for nothing that of all the figures he chose to stand for the city in his dread vision of things as they were, three emerge out of the gloom and horror: Sapia, to wit, who flouted God; Albero, who tried to fly; and La Pia, who was beautiful, unhappy, and died young.[1] As they were then, so they are now;



THE CONSUMA, SIENA.

they and they only have made their Siena; the flushed hill-city is the vesture of their spirit. Tragic, futile, amorous, ardent, unhappy, above all of them La Pia stands before time as the emblem of her nation. "Siena mi fè, disfecemi Maremma."[2]

[1] See Chapter II. for the consideration of this great power of Dante's.

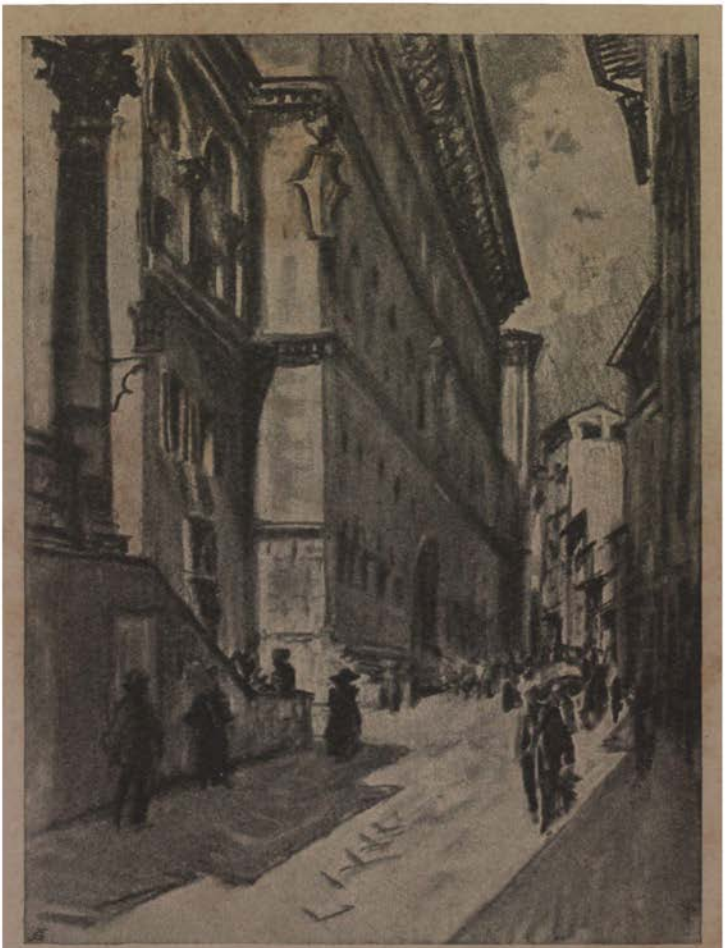
[2] My brief summary of Sienese history, such as it is, must be sought in the Appendix to this chapter: what I have not been able to say there

It is the firm opinion of the other nations of Tuscany that the Sienese are mad. I remember driving once to the city from Colle in a pelting storm of rain, and how Trombino, the pertest Florentine that ever sucked a lemon, and one of the best drivers, prepared me for the worst by loud confidences from his box. "The skies weep, signore," he said, "and well they may, for we are going among a people to whom those *imbecilli* of Volterra are as senators and statesmen." I told him that this was what they call *fiorentinismo*, and hurt him by the imputation. "To begin with, sir," he replied, "*con rispetto parlando*, I am not a Florentine. No, thank God, but a plain Pont'-a-Mensolano. Moreover, all the world knows that I am telling you the truth. These people of Siena—why, did your lordship never hear of the Grand Duke Leopoldo, what he replied to the Sanesi when they asked him for the profits of the *dazio* for ten years, to build

Young men of Siena.

may be indicated here. It is that, just as character is what one sees all over Siena, so it is what one can find detailed in every page of Sienese history: the blend—if I may repeat myself—of the tragic and the futile. Not a person upon her scene but betrays some twist, some salient peak; not a biography could be made but it would be notable for some sharpness of disaster, some splendid push for fame, and disastrous recoil, some heart-ache, some cry prolonged and solitary. Provenzano Salvani, for example, no doubt the greatest of the Sienese—upon what does his fame rest if not upon his sardonic end in the field of Colle, his death, and the rout of his host, which depended upon a comma? Pandolfo Petrucci—how high he soared, what a palace he built! He was the Magnificent for a season; yet the person of a vicious, pretty baggage of a Salicottina dragged him down into the mire. Pienza, a broad city without citizens, is the ridiculous monument of Æneas Sylvius, who sat the throne of Peter and is otherwise famous for a luxurious tale. Saint Catherine, true daughter of her nation, coaxed and stung the Popes into Rome, but she could not make them Christians. And I don't think any failure recorded of any son or daughter of Siena is more pathetic to consider than this of hers.

themselves a *manicomio?* '*Manicomio?* *Chè, chè!*' says his Excellency, 'what next? Shut



SIENA.

your gates, my brothers, and lock them, and there is your *manicomio* ready made, and all your

madmen inside it.'[1] Now, certainly, he would never have made a speech like that, to which all Europe would listen, unless he had good reason."

It is not true that the Sienese are mad, but it is quite true that they have strongly marked idiosyncrasy, very hard to describe, but finding its readiest outlet in "peacockery." Processions, displays, spectacles, and shows—these things are innate. Just as with us, when we think well of a compatriot we entertain him at dinner, so the Sienese give him a procession. And as our notion of a public holiday seems incompletely realised without a bugler upon the box-seat of a four-horse brake, so theirs can only be satisfied by tossing flags. Florence has her day of San Giovanni, her Easter Saturday and Giorno dei Grilli; but processions are a small part of these: a general junketing is more truly what goes on. Whereas in Siena, at the festivals of Saint Catherine or of the Virgin Mary, or at that of Corpus Domini, whatever solemnities mark the day—and sometimes it may be horse-racing, and always it is Mass—one begins it and ends it with processions, music, banners to the wind. The young men are extremely expert with flags, and very small provocation is needed—a birthday, a party of pleasure, five-and-twenty francs in hand—to set the *alfieri* twirling down the streets with the solemn gaiety of dervishes, tossing their great silken banners, now up, now down, now level with the telegraph-wires, now carpets for the

[1] This is a good story of Trombino's, and shows that a Lorrainer could wield a rapier. Compared with it, Lorenzo's gibe is bludgeon-work. "To a Sienese who condoled with him upon his eyesight, and added that the air of Florence was bad for the eyes, Lorenzo retorted, 'And that of Siena for the brain.'"—Armstrong, *Lorenzo de' Medici*, 301.

pavement, now drapery for the slim body of the handler, and becoming his sinuous graces mighty well. Clothes again! They are very fond of mediæval dress, parti-coloured trunks, slashes and points, doublets, short cloaks, red caps and plumes: "targeted tailzies," as Knox used to call them, they wear them bravely and admire

FONTE OVILE, SIENA.

each other. One after another the *contrade* have their day of flagging. In Saint Catherine's honour the Goose struts before every door in Fontebranda, and the flag-bearers dance before her silver image up and down her street just as David did before the ark. The Madonna of Provenzano has her day, San Bernardino his; the Madonna del Voto is never forgotten; on two days of the year all the *contrade* together vie with

each other who shall make the greatest display; and the city bristles with the totem-signs of chosen creatures. The Snail's horns are exalted, the Giraffe snuffs war in the air, and says among the captains, "Ha, ha!" The Goose defies the Panther, the Dragon and the Grub, worms alike, forget their common parent. They know that men will be ready to die this day that their name may be glorious; and that, likely enough, some man will die. Then indeed, as Mr. Heywood says, husband and wife, should they have come together from opposing signs, will separate for the occasion; and the woman will go to her father's house, "there to exult or weep" in her nation's fate. For though Siena is a nation, it contains seventeen nations within its walls, not one of which has a good word to say for another.[1]

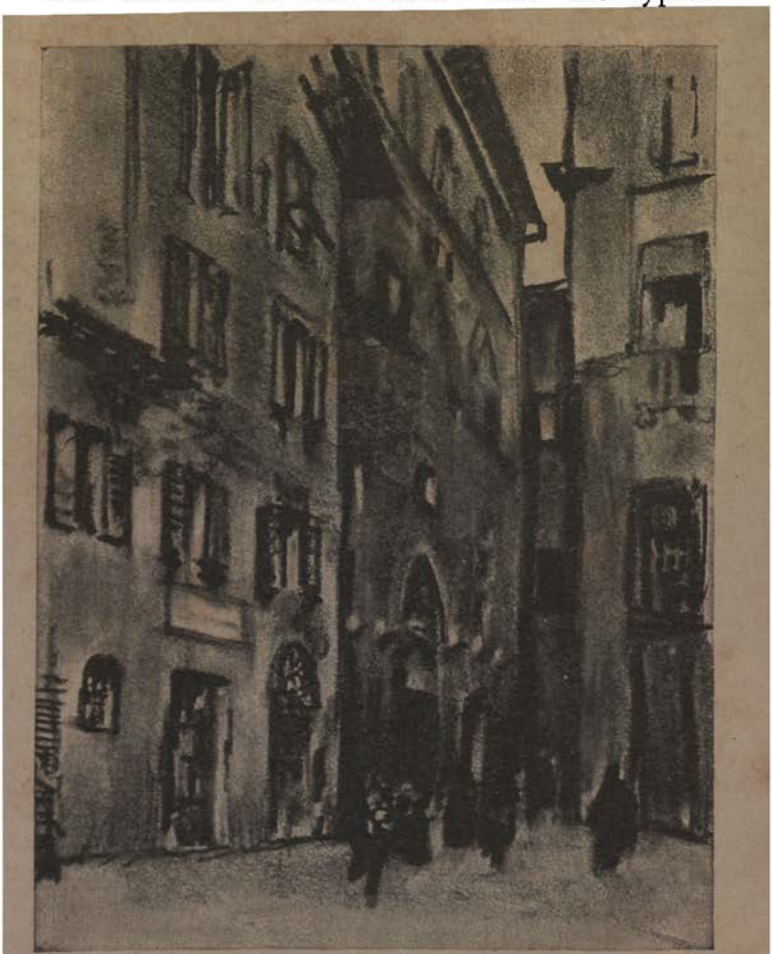
Maidens of Siena.

But I have been led away from Sienese youth, which I must describe as flamboyant, and from Sienese maidenhood, which, of a surety, is not coy. Flaming is the word for her young men, so soon set afire, but superb for her young women, so dangerous to importune. They give you to understand that they are there to be wooed; but the same lazy eyelids proclaim that they may hardly be won.

Doubt not but that there are girls of Siena of the pleading, tender, die-away sort, divine children, dangerous to men. Of such was Aurelia Gualandi, whose tale is yet to be told. Also there are the secret, slow-smiling, green-eyed, ivory-pale women celebrated by Matteo, son of Giovanni, who are to be found not only in the Accademia

[1] See Mr. W. Heywood's *Palio of Siena* for a popular, but most excellent account of these strange affairs.

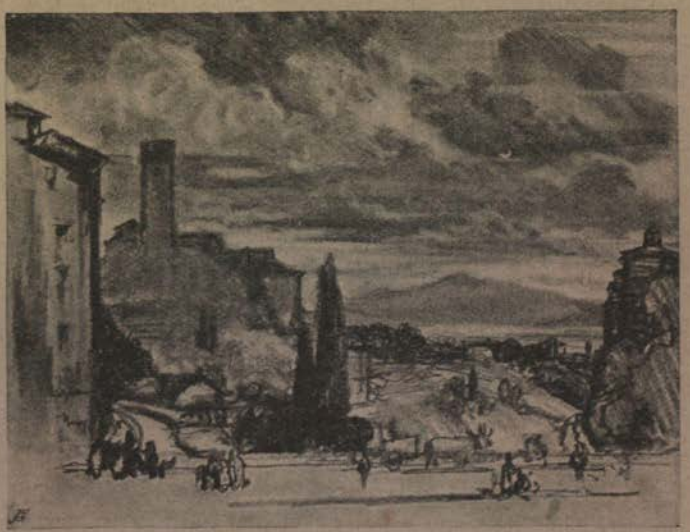
delle Belle Arti, but at Mass in the churches or with children on the Lizza. But the typical



PALAZZO TOLOMEI, SIENA.

Sienese virgin is not one of these; rather she is tall, lithe, free-moving as a panther, hath a bold

glance and a very high head. *Incessu patet Dea:* her gait is Dian's if her deeds are not. Nor are they often. All things seem lawful to her; she walks thorny paths with the light foot of a nymph; she dips her hands in muddy pools, but fouls them not. Of such was Livia, the divine, the remarked Livia, with whom you shall be



THE SERVI, SIENA.

acquaint before this book is one chapter the heavier; and a good note on page 503 hereto will give you the names and deeds of three more.

They were, then, a people of French habit, a chivalrous people—frank, noble, attracted by the best of its kind, furious lovers of good alike and evil. They loved the Lady of heaven, but they loved no less the Lady of the stews—that imperious, kindly, beautiful, but altogether abomin-

able Venus of the plebs, who maddened their Checho Angiolieri and drained their Pandolfo

THE CATHEDRAL, SIENA.

down to the lees. It is most pertinent to inquire what sort of outlet this people found, what sort of

a flood-mark, so to speak, they left upon the shores of Time; for mark, beside a pathetic name, they must needs have made.

Literature,

What mark? None in literature, that's certain. One poet, Checho Angiolieri—unless Perfetti, the *improvvisatore*, whom Monsieur de Brosses admired, is to be reckoned; one novelist, San Bernardino; one humanist, Æneas Sylvius; one historian, Malavolti, with nothing but volume to recommend him; and the tale is told. Mr. L. Douglas, in a recent work, gives two bad reasons for the absence of literary faculty, and one good one—so excellent, indeed, that it is impossible to have a better. "The Sienese," he says, *thirdly*, "were not a literary people." Can there be a better reason for the absence of literature in a race of men? That the Sienese, as he urges in his *firstly* and *secondly*, "wasted their energies in political strife," is beside the mark; for what else, pray, did every other people in Tuscany? Or if political excitement forbade artistic energy, why, as he labours afterwards to show, were the painters so active? Had he rather pointed out that literature demands leisure of the heart,—which may perfectly subsist in the midst of a whirlwind of politics,—and that in Siena there never was any such blessing, I should have had no quarrel with him. Both terms of that proposition are true. Leisure of the heart can always be secured by the poet whose heart insists upon it. Dante had it, though he was seethed in the Florentine ferment, and wandered abroad from bitterness to bitterness. Yet he had it. That heart which he gave into the green-eyed

lady's keeping in her ninth year he never asked back again.

But the Sienese never had their hearts at rest. Two love-affairs at once kept them continually astir, neither of them within the Florentine grasp, and neither of them inducive of literary exercise. The first was chivalry, the meat of the eyes; the second piety, the

And love-affairs.

THE RED PALACE, SIENA.

wine of the soul. These are ardours which involve a splendid strenuousness in pursuit fatal to letters; and they were blent here in a way peculiar to the Sienese among Italian peoples. The Sienese were militant pietists, devout chevaliers. Their service of the Virgin was exactly feudal; she was their suzerain, their liege lady. At one time or another every armigerous male in the city must have put his hands between her hands and sworn to be her man. There is room for passion in all this, but none for artistry, without which literature

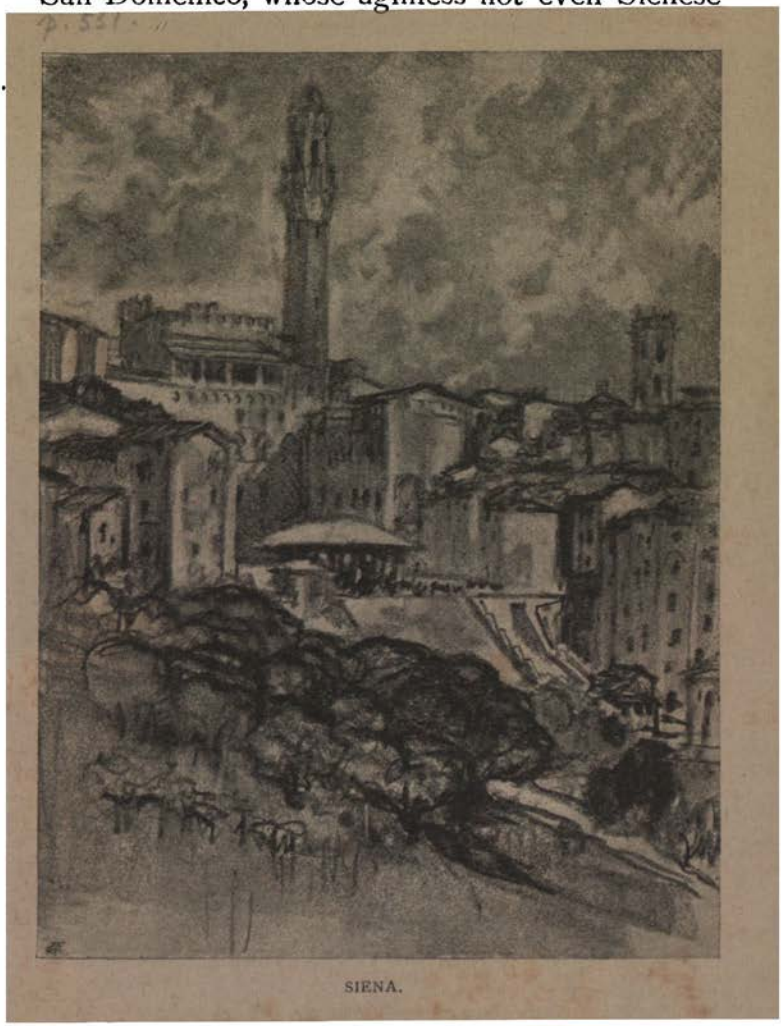
will not thrive. If Dante was too great, Petrarch was, in a sense, too small a man to have been a citizen of the Virgin's city. So there was not enough freedom from preoccupation either for a humourist like Sacchetti, or a miniaturist of Boccaccio's sort. In letters, as in most other fine things, 'tis love that makes the world go round; and it may be love of God, or country, or a woman. But another love there must be mingled with it—the love of paper and ink. For that kind of love the Sienese had no time to spare.

Let us pry more narrowly into the city. By position it is one of great outlooks, and can be magnificently seen from any point of the compass; but it is unique, I believe, in this, that within the walls there are great views. Siena, like the king's daughter, is all glorious within, but, unlike the damsel, she can see herself so. The hill on which she stands is three-peaked—one more than Parnassus; or perhaps it would be more correct to say that this hill, whose highest point bears the cathedral, is like a star of five points, whereof there are three greater and two lesser rays.[1] From any one of these you may look upon two others, and as often as not see yet

Architecture and prospect.

[1] The five rays of the star end in the five great gates of Siena, to which steep streets run down into the gorge along the spines of the rock. Porta Camollia, Porta Pispini, Porta Romana, Porta San Marco, are the gates—these and the Gate of Fontebranda. The culmination of the star itself is where the church stands, on a solitary spur immediately above a cliff. You reach it, you leave it by stairs. You look upon its striped side, from San Domenico, across a glen clothed now by russet-purple roofs, green only at the bottom, where vineyards are still fruitful and shade abundant. Out of this live rock, out of the heart of Siena, the cool water flows which brims a fountain at every gate Fontebranda, Fontegiusta, Fonte Nuova, and so on.

other two beyond. From the Lizza you see past San Domenico, whose ugliness not even Sienese



SIENA.

prestige can redeem, to the ray upon which the cathedral stands. This gives you—odd effect!

the grey dome in front of the bell-tower, the whole north side in severe profile, and the top of the Baptistery like a ragged cliff. The background of your picture is of hills, grey and thunderous—the mountains of Volterra. From the steps of the Servite church there is as good a view, if not better; from the market-place at the back of the Palace, from the top of the Via Sant' Agata: and all these prospects of purple, white, and rose—sweet-pea-colour—with bright green interspersed, are to be had without passing the walls.

But just as Dante, by the twist of his genius, is not apparently Florentine, so Siena, by thrust of character, is not obviously Tuscan. Something at once rational and gay, a plain habit with something light-hearted, marks the long, yellow-faced, broad-eaved streets of Florence, Arezzo, and Pistoja, and is to be discerned in towns of more individuality, towns like Lucca and Pisa. There are whole quarters of Siena where you won't see it at all. A typical Florentine palace of the Quattrocento is the Riccardi. The Strozzi is of the same order, but carried up to the superlative. The Pitti is the dream of a megalo-maniac. But compare with these the great Sienese hotels of the same century; remember that magnificent red house on the left arc of the Campo.[1] There is an allure upon it, a grace, a distinction, a bid for the apple which the Florentines knew not of. Even the Piccolomini, Rossellino's though it be, has

[1] As for the Campo, Montaigne says with excellent judgment, "The Piazza of Siena is the finest of any city in the world." I am very sure he is right, if great palaces, space, and a tower like an aloe-blossom have anything to do in a comparison. Next to it, in Italy, I should put the Prato della Valle of Padua. These two places seem to me as if they had been sprung whole *totus teres*, etc.—out of a man's brain.

(to my eyes) a curious felicity of design, and a choiceness denied to what he did for the Rucellai in Florence, and certainly denied to the great Strozzi heap. But it is when one comes to the Gothic houses, the Tolomei, for instance, or the Palazzo Pubblico, that one finds out wherein the specific flower of Sienese beauty still blows. There are whole streets of the like of these[1]—empty streets, left for you and the wind to wander as you list. Here are the places wherein to woo the muse of Siena; for chivalry has thriven here, or there is nothing expressive in architecture.

Siena's, however, is a case where architecture was only good when it was domestic. Its people felt Gothic when they built a palace: in church-building they did worse than most of their neighbours. You will find no church in Siena worth an hour's serious contemplation. Personally, I may wonder at the Duomo—and I do;[2] but I am not going to suppose it good building; and nobody pretends that it is good Gothic. Like many other churches in Tuscany—like the Duomo of Florence for one—it dazzles you, takes your breath away, and so far succeeds. If that were the simple ambition of its contriver he has his reward. All the world wonders and applauds. Inside, there is no gainsaying that the stark measures taken do produce an effect not unlike that of a fine Gothic cathedral-church. It seems to have been got by outlining. With striped columns, with picked-out

Churches.

[1] I don't mean, of course, that there are whole streets of thirteenth-century palaces, but of palaces inspired by thirteenth-century art.

[2] Or, rather, I have wondered in my day. Let me refer the reader who cares for such a little matter to *Earthwork out of Tuscany*, 3rd edition, p. 135.

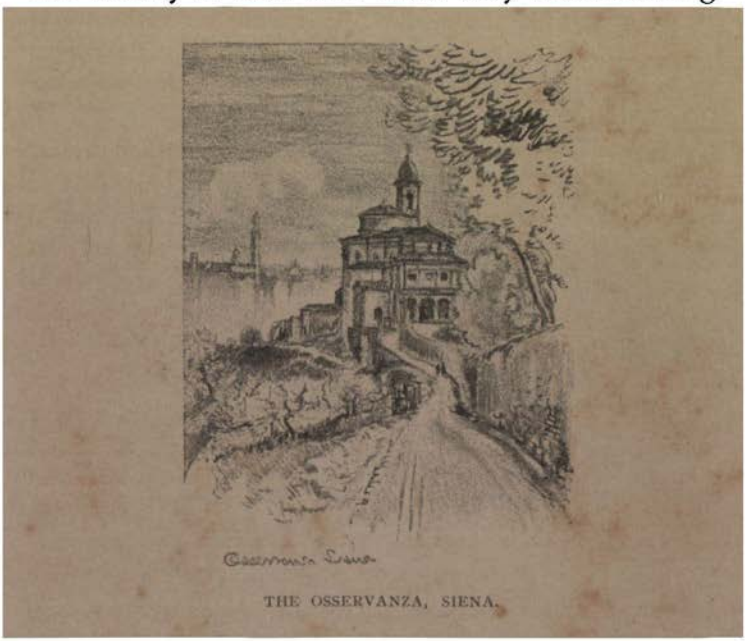
ribs, starry spandrils, loaded window-soffits, dappled pavement—well, with all this you do succeed in getting the kind of dædal illusion which pure Gothic gives you by more lawful means; but of course you get none of the mystery of Gothic. The Sienese did, in fact, by outlining in paint and coloured stone what the French did by masses and forms. The effect is nothing so good; it is enormously heavy; but it is an effect, a strong effect, and, incredible as it may seem, a Gothic effect.[1]

Painting.

Lovers of the Queen of heaven, they have not been able to build her a house; but have they painted her portrait? Assuredly they have tried, as never lover yet, to show her to us as she showed herself to them, without spot, utterly kind, of peerless beauty, yet a crowned queen. To see Sienese paintings is to have no doubt of this. Their Madonnas have a beauty not of this world; but their paintings are not pictures. The gallery at Siena is evidence of love, but not of art. Just as a doting husband will dress his wife delightfully, hang her little person with jewels and chains, and set a crown upon her empty little head, and with every ounce of value he puts on her will be spending and allaying his frenzy of adoration—so I find the Sienese painters to have been, from Duccio, whom Mr. Douglas so strangely

[1] For one instance out of many of unlawful practice, take the line of popes' heads under the clerestory windows; what is that but a way of embossing? But to emboss a building with popes' heads which cannot even be seen for what they are, is more than unlawful—is outrageous. The culmination of busyness, overlaying and overdoing, is to be sought in the Piccolomini Library, whose frescoes, if they were not gilt, would be nothing. It is as if one were to keep one's books in a jewel-case.

exalts, to Neroccio, beloved by Mr. Berenson. They loved Madonna far above their force as artists; but, mercifully for themselves and us, they had gold-leaf in plenty and a wonderful knack of pattern. Herein they found their consolation and their snare. They thought they were showing her worthy of their love when they were showing



THE OSSERVANZA, SIENA.

their love worthy of her. Their pictures are less pictures than panels of conventional ornament, and, as such, excellence can go no farther. I don't suppose the world can show a vision more exquisitely frail and lovely than a picture of Matteo of Siena's; and yet a vision it is, lighter than vanity itself, and emptier, and easier pricked, if one had the heart to do it. And the truth, of

course, is that it lay not in the Sienese nature to do anything wholly or long.[1]

[1] Two things will strike the candid visitor to the Belle Arti of Siena. The first is that the Sienese painted little but the Madonna; the second, that they painted her flat. A rocky background here and there, a suggestion of an horizon somewhere, a sky which is neither black nor scratched gold, semblances of men and of angels, are not enough to break down the law. So far as life is concerned, all these things are hieroglyphs: life has nothing to do with the business; the world is a cloister-garden, a place of temporary sojourn fit to dream in. It is the fact that the Sienese painters were illuminators from first to last, with the one possible exception of Ambrogio Lorenzetti. From Duccio, the Byzantine, through Taddeo and Sano, to Benvenuto the embroiderer, to Matteo and Neroccio, the neurotic and the fantastic, there is but one subject, the Sacra Conversazione, one treatment, the gilder's. Whether with the blue background and diapered crimson curtain of fresco, or the *fondo d' oro* of the altarpiece, the miniaturist method persists; and it is equally impossible to deny the charm it has, or the speed with which it can cloy. Both are due to its cloistral, recollected air, its flavour of the oratory, its intense limitation, its lavish ornament and extreme beauty. It is undoubtedly true that the man who calls himself a miserable sinner every day for a year either forgets it or doubts it profoundly at the end of the term. So here, if you steadfastly behold a painted ecstasy, you may be rapt out of yourself for a season; but not if you behold nothing else; not if you continue to behold it for years. But decoration, for example! It would indeed be difficult to get more magnificent wall-covering than the great devotional fresco in the Palazzo Pubblico of this place. Types of more refined spiritual beauty than those of Benvenuto and Matteo I do not believe to exist. And here, at least, are two Sienese painters who are illustrated by life (if they do not illustrate it); for these lovely, frail, desirous women are national; they are Sienese, than whom there are none more beautiful in all long Italy. Matteo's Madonna, in a halo of golden straw, walks the Via di Città at this hour, with the same ivory tints, the same doubtful smile. Her green eyes sparkle and peer as ever they did; her slim fingers play with each other as you speak to her; they would go on playing if you spilled your heart over her feet. A lazy beauty; either she hath vice or she is stupid. Half the host of Benvenuto's heaven may be seen in the Campo on those white-hot days of August when the Palio is running. As for Neroccio's impossible blondes—impossibly fair, impossibly slim—with their hair like pale silk and their faces like pink peonies, these belong to some still seraglio of the mind, have lived neither on earth nor live in heaven. Gracious images of green-sick adoration, nymphs of the nympholept—look at them, wonder, desire (if you choose): they are art, and good art, but they are the art of them who believe that the world is a garden enclosed. Painting is more than outline and surface ornament; Giotto's Florence knew better, and Carpaccio's Venice too, and Mantegna's Padua. It may be a question, when discussing the absolute in this matter, how far any Italian painting of any school whatever may stand beside that of

But then — all deductions made: history denied, painter's work decried — what a city of cities Siena remains! All her gallant, impossible memories—the Spending Club, whose house still stands; Checho and his beautiful wench at Fontebranda; Provenzano begging in the Campo; Pier Pettignano, the inspired comb-seller; poor fragrant Saint Catherine, whose shrivelled head you may still see if you care; Pandolfo Petrucci doting on a bad girl; Æneas Sylvius penning a love-tale and making epigrams upon the Miraculous Blood of Mantua; Livia Fausta in Dian's buskins and white tunic[1]— absurd, pitiful, gallant, lonely race! Your unthrift is to me more splendid than all the snug Florentine *masserizia!* They tell the tale of the Madonna of Provenzano, that hollow-eyed, armless goddess of three centuries' devotion, that she constituted

the Low Countries: my say has been said; the quarrel is an old one and somewhat musty. But, like for like, there can be none at all that where the Florentine pushed up from height to height of mastery over scope and method, the Sienese never rose above a softened and elegant ideography. Fra Angelico himself, the painter of faëry without peer, is a realist when confronted with Sano di Pietro.

[1] There were three Hippolytas in the field: the Signora Livia Fausta, the Signora Laodamia Forteguerra—was ever a more glorious name?—and the Signora Piccolomini. The occasion was the Spanish leaguer: and here they are, as Monluc saw them in their gear of war:—

"Toutes les dames de la ville de Sienne se despartirent en trois bandes. La première estoict conduicte par la Signora Forteguerra, qui estoict vestue de violet, et toutes celles qui la suivoient aussi, ayant son accoustrement en façon d'une nymphe, court et monstrant le brodequin; la seconde estoict la Signora Piccolomini, vestue de satin incarnardin, et sa troupe de mesme livrée; la troisieme estoict la Signora Livia Fausta, vestue toute de blanc, comme aussi estoict sa suitte avec son enseigne blanche."

A picture, surely, for Ghirlandajo! And here is Monluc's tribute:—

"Il ne sera jamais, dames siennoises, que je n'immortalise vostre nom, tant que le livre de Monluc vivra; car, à la vérité, vous estes dignes d'immortelle louange, si jamais femmes le feurent." Gallant tribute to gallant doing; but it all availed them nothing.

herself patroness of that ill-famed quarter of the city, did miracles upon the bruised bodies of her clients, and was adored by them all. Of what secrets was she not a partaker? Of what griefs was she not consolatrix? What halting feet did she not sustain? It is highly characteristic of a city which never thought of anything but love of women, and whose virtues, as well as whose failings, sprang from that prepossession that they should invoke such a goddess. Patroness of *hetairæ!* One can imagine a more ignoble office, I think.

APPENDIX

SIENESE HISTORY

To say—as I do say—that of history in the proper sense, of significant, correlated history, Siena has none whatever, is only to insist that her unhappy biography, if one could by pains get at it, will be found to be the sum of her character and environment. The things which stir the pulse of every sojourner in her solitudes—to which I have abundantly referred—are very worthy to be felt, proper objects of inquiry for the archæologist, and not to be lost sight of by the historian who shall build with his bricks. They may some day give substance to a history of the Tuscan race, but they will never make a history of Siena—as of late Mr. Douglas has essayed to compose it. Such a thing as that Siena has not to give to him or any learned man; nor could we have had it by any possibility. Let us examine this matter a little.

Born, as every other Tuscan nation was, of a Frankish graft upon an Etruscan stock, she endured, with every other, the same phases of development, and shared, with every other but one,[1] the same unavoidable fate. Whether Bishop or Gastaldo was the nucleus round which the little body-politic

[1] That one, of course, was Florence, born to dominate all.

was formed, matters nothing to the traveller in her quiet and shadowed streets. Suffice it, for present purposes, that we find a commune of Siena in the twelfth century at war with that of Florence in 1141. They warred about a frontier town, —Semifonte the lost, in this case—and strengthened themselves by the very act of loss, as mostly happens in warfare. Wars, too, if raids and counter-raids can be so called, with the feudal chiefs of the hills absorb the next full century; slowly the commune is too many for the mountain thieves— Aldobrandeschi of Monte Amiata, Pannocchieschi in the dreary Volterran country, brigand-haunted then as now; one does not need their names. Florence went through the same courses with her Uberti and Alberti, having been driven to them by the same needs. What Tuscan state did not? Before a quarter of the thirteenth century had gone by, the last of her neighbours fell in to Siena; then began an age of possible government. The rule of the Ventiquattro was set up under Provenzano Salvani, greatest of the Sienese, and Bonaguida Lucari, one of the most pious,[1] and had a splendid setting-off. The Ghibellines of Florence, chased from their own city, became guests and allies: one of them was Farinata degli Uberti. In 1260 was fought the red field of Montaperti, by virtue of which crowning mercy, for four or five years, Florence virtually lay at the feet of Siena, and was only saved from lying literally there by the daring and patriotism of Farinata. Every reader of Dante has pictured the scene at Empoli: all the savage little States yapping and snarling at the beaten Florence, and Farinata confronting them.[2] They yapped and snarled, but they did no more. Followed three terrible years, each with its smashing blow to Siena and the Ghibellines: Benevento in 1266, Tagliacozzo in 1268, Colle in 1269. In this last affair the capture, death, and shameful fate of Provenzano Salvani made it out of the question that Siena could ever be more than a provincial town. Now here too, except for the last struggle of all, when she was brought into the vortex set swirling by Cæsar Borgia, and went down in it, the relations of Siena with history cease.

[1] With San Bernardino, he seems to have been the only Sienese who knew how to combine piety and common sense.

[2] See back, Chapter XVI.

As for the general stages of her biography, feuds, vendettas, and faction-fights which count for much in all Tuscan story, make up the rest of Siena's. They were never so paralysing as the Florentine or Aretine, nor pursued to such ravenous lengths as the Pisan, nor spread so widely as the Pistolese; in fact, they were confined to two families, and made little or no stir outside the contado. The Salimbeni and Tolomei were protagonists in the blood-spattered little melodrama which began about 1315, and did not stop until Duke Cosimo de' Medici stopped all. Independently of these squabbles the story of government ran the usual Tuscan course. The Twenty-Four went down in the ruin of Tagliacozzo. It had been a temperately compounded oligarchy, such as has always been found to suit best to the Italian temper, half feudal, half mercantile. The Nine who followed them were frankly *bourgeois*, with money to lend and bills to discount—peace-at-any-price men. The plague killed them, and the Twelve reigned in their stead, a government of small tradesmen. Theirs was the day of the Condottieri (whom they and their predecessors had called up to save them): free-riding, free-booting gentry with resounding, brazen names—"Enemies of God," Companions of the Hat, Companions of St. George, White Companies, Hawkwood, and the likes of Hawkwood; petty raiders making way for greater men of larger ideas, Castruccio, Sforza, Piccinnino, Montefeltro. A government bolstered by such buttresses could not last, and did not. In 1368 the remnants of the old factions—the Ventiquattro, the Nove, and what not—arose, carried the Palace by assault, and made opportunity for a lower class yet: that of the artisans. Those were great days for the *popol minuto*—1371 or thereabouts; days for the Company of the Grub and their redoubtable leader, one Domenico an old-clothes man, with a pretty knack of piety and murder.

But why pursue the tale, which is that of every town in Tuscany, and is exemplified once and for all in that of Florence? So far, the reader will see, every step can be watched on the Arno; so forth also it can be matched. For upon the shoulders of Domenico and his *riformatori* of Siena, just as surely as Cosimo Vecchio upon those of the Ciompi and their sequels, there climbed up one Pandolfo Petrucci to the tyrant's chair; and he might have held it, as the Medici

held theirs, but for two reasons. The Visconti-Valois marriage (old affair of Milan) let Europe into Italy, and Pandolfo took the wrong side—here is one reason; and the other is that he had no descendants worth a rush and no collaterals either. I observe that Mr. L. Douglas[1] thinks meanly of Pandolfo. Machiavelli thought highly of him, and Professor Villari shares the opinion. Students of the man and his times will take their choice of sides, remembering, however, that Machiavelli had had a hand in most of the rubbers he reports. Pandolfo's fate was to contend with Cæsar Borgia, at long odds. Against the papal battalions what had he but the name of the King of France? It may fairly be said that he made a match of it. He outlived Pope Alexander, saw one of his sons made Cardinal by Pope Julius, and died leaving his tyranny intact. His son Borghese was a worthless bully who could neither use his inheritance nor procure its use by a successor. He was worse than Piero de Medici in this at least, that he could not beget a Lorenzo.

The Petrucci dynasty, so to call it—a dynasty of one—came to an end in 1524; and then afterwards the end of Siena as a State was a matter of a few years. The Emperor Charles marched in in 1526, and his Spaniards were expelled, by the gust of a dying flicker of patriotism, in 1536. But in 1553 Don Garcia brought them back, and the end was at hand. Of that bitter siege I shall say nothing, but refer the reader to Captain Napier and the Commentaries of Monluc, as brave a Gascon as ever crooked an arm. In spite of this matchless Monluc, in spite of Piero Strozzi, an explosive Florentine outlaw, in spite of the noble lady Livia Fausta and her company of Amazons, in spite of Brandano and his soothsay, in spite of Madonna, in 1555 Monluc walked out, a beaten man of a beaten master, and Marignano walked in. Two years later Siena was handed over to Duke Cosimo of Florence. Here is the tale told. First Tuscan state to be marked out by Florence for conquest, she was the last to fall. But why she was so marked, and why she was doomed to fall, are questions which belong not to Sienese history, but to Florentine, to European history. I shall add here, and with that pleasure one always has in recommending a good book,

[1] In his painstaking "History" of Siena.

that Mr. William Heywood seems to me the only English writer who really knows, and has been able to convey, the specific nature of this extraordinary people. The three of his books best known to me are, *Our Lady of August and the Palio of Siena* (1899); *The Ensamples of Fra Filippo, a Study of Mediæval Siena* (1901); *A Pictorial Chronicle of Siena* (1902). All these are published by the excellent and expert Signor Torrini in the Via di Città. Mr. Heywood's work has that rare combination of humour and erudition, and that even rarer blend of the critical with the enthusiastic faculty, which makes good and wise readers as it is followed from stave to stave. To love Italy, and to give her lovers, a man must be a classic, something of a pedant, and a humanist. The past lives in every angle of the road; the forms are so precise, the air so clear, that exact scholarship is of the essence of the contract; and yet one must be tender with the people, see them the best thing in their country, be patient, be just, and yet be a lover. Italy has been well served before now by men of our race. Evelyn loved her, so did Dennis, and Storey, the American sculptor, whose "Roba di Roma" should have earned him something like immortality. At this hour Mr. Carmichael and Mr. Heywood, each in his own way, are upholding the tradition. But I give the palm to Mr. Heywood.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE PORTRAIT OF LIVIA

WHEN Livia told me that she was eighteen, and tall for her age, I could only reply that her years had done well for her, since inches became her. She admitted it without any kind of complacency; she glanced over her shoulder to the little mirror and looked at her straight back. "Non c'è male," she said, and then, turning about, nodding brightly a farewell to her counterfeit—"E pure bellina—It's rather pretty"; which undoubtedly it was. Her father, who was mending one of his boots with part of a cardboard box, paused from his labours, tack in mouth, to admire this remarkable progeny of his. He looked her up, he looked her down, he nodded, chuckled, rubbed his hands. "One would not find her fellow in all the nations of Siena," he said to me. "Senta, signore—she rears up her crest like the Mangia tower." Livia then, not choosing to be praised by any one but herself, flamed into scolding and drove him out-of-doors to his business. Admiring her more than ever, he departed with uplifted hands. "Cosa straordinaria! E quasi un arcagnuolo! Davvero, davvero, è quasi Gabriello!"

I should like to do her portrait in Boccaccio's manner, for she certainly belongs to his gallery.

Livia, at eighteen, to the indolent graces of a growing girl was able to add the self-possession and stored knowledge of the world which you look for in a woman of thirty. Her composure and arrogance could not be an offence, because they seemed so reasonable and she so good-tempered. Nothing startled her, nothing stirred her to raptures either of wonder or delight, nothing hurt, nothing disturbed, and, so far as I can tell, nothing shocked her. I have seen her walk through the crowded market, and cross the Campo when it was packed with men, as calmly, as unconsciously, as idly as a queen might pass down a corridor between her ranked and bowing suitors. She had a long, slow, swinging manner of going, carried her head very high, and looked straight in front of her. Comments were many: the Sienese are great amateurs of beauty and very outspoken: they affected her not at all. If she became aware—and she was always aware—of some person to whom she wished to speak, she stopped and said her say, but rarely looked at him. Her voice was low and thrilling; there was the soft blur upon it—like the bloom on a plum—which her nation has. In speech she was short, clear, and succinct; it was impossible—often unhappily so—to doubt her meaning. She was the most vividly beautiful girl I have ever seen, without any kind of exception; and those are not terms to apply at random. Pretty, handsome, lovely, charming, a many young woman may be; but she who is beautiful (it must be said) shares that quality with the Venus of Milo, Helen of Troy,

Desdemona, Imogen, Ethel Newcome, and Diana Vernon—and with nobody else. Therefore she

ON THE WAY TO SIENA.

belongs to the narrowest circle, the most exclusive society in this world or the next. Livia,

without cavil, was a member of that society; and I had rather state it thus bluntly than essay the auctioneer's catalogue, the "Item, a grey eye or so," which Shakespeare has made ridiculous. Her eyes, by the way, were more green than grey, and the effect she had upon one was that of a moonlight night, compact as that is of ivory pallors and velvet darks, at once clear and cold, severe and calm.

I may add that I never saw her wear a hat. That wondrous halo of lemon straw which the maids of her city affect would have become her as her crescent sets Dian apart from her bevy; but Livia chose to be crowned only by her black hair. She denied herself many other advantages: she was capable of high rages, and looked then like Medusa; but mostly she was superbly still. Her tongue could be shrewish—nay, it could bite like vitriol; but mostly it was idle. I don't know that she was affectionate; I never saw any kindly passion in her, and only once her steady eyes dimmed by tears. She was always friendly with me, after our first introduction, which I must show to have been a delicate affair, and never failed to salute me in the street, though, after her usual fashion, she never seemed to see me there. I don't know that it matters much, or that it would be very interesting, otherwise I could tell how I have accompanied her to feasts and festivals, to processions and Church mysteries, have sat with her at singular tables, and knelt by her side at dusky little shrines unknown to any casual travellers. It seems better to tell how she expounded to me the cult of the great Madonna of Siena, and in so doing herself and her father's nation; and for

a beginning of that I must show how she and I became acquainted.

I was on the Lizza one breezy May morning —that wooded spur from which you look past the rock of San Domenico to that of Città, and have the whole length of that wonderful striped church in focus, with its light-poised dome thrust,

PIAZZA, SIENA.

by accident of the ground, actually in front of its sable and white guardian, the bell-tower. If I tired of this, I had the far view of Monte Maggio to feast upon, and all the purple west. About me and above were sunlight and the fragrance of flowering trees; below my feet the players at *pallone*, who never forego the grand gesture for the great shot. It seemed good for me to be there—but then, desiring to smoke, I found my

match-box empty, and was a baffled voluptuary indeed. "These are my crosses, Mr. Wesley" —one remembers Fitzgerald's good story.

Now I suppose that I had looked round about in that vaguely harassed manner an Englishman is so ready to wear. I have no doubt of it. In so doing I became aware of some one by my side, courteous, deferential, a Tuscan. An old, anxious man, hawker of matches, must have been on the watch: he had seen his opportunity bursting-ripe, and had pounced upon it. His tender air constrains me still. "Ecco, signore, fiammiferi—buoni, freschi," said he. It was not, believe me, that he wished to trade, but that he was resolute to please. The instinct is as old as the Cæsars; and so is that which moved him next—the decision to improve upon so auspicious a moment. I selected my matches, paid him, and saluted; he fixed me with a penetrating, melancholy eye, and with a wheedling air inquired, "Vuol vedere una raggazza?"

Upon my soul, this was a very different thing; and yet I suppose ten men out of eleven would have avoided, as I did, with my "Chè raggazza?" He bowed his head, but did not cease to pierce me with those melting, deprecating eyes. "Mia figliuola," he said gently, and for some minutes I was dumb.

He too being at the end of his tether, I was enabled to reflect upon this singular proposition. The new is the unexpected, the unexpected the irregular, the irregular either shocking or a bore to my orderly nation; but this was a chain of habit which I was young enough then to discard. And, apart from it, there seemed no reason parti-

cularly cogent why I should not see this person's daughter, and many reasons why I should. *Homo sum*, etc.—here was one, and a plausible argument; the gratification of curiosity, the achievement of an adventure, the gratification of a solicitous parent—here were sufficient others. To be short, I wrote his address upon a card: Tortoni, Tertulliano, Vicolo al Vento, No.—4° and promised to wait upon him in the course of the afternoon. He professed himself my servant, his house my inn, and withdrew.

This Vicolo al Vento is an alley neither savoury nor polite which runs out of the Via del Rè into the Piazza di Provenzano. I knew it for the recognised parade-ground of the beggars, who meet there one day in the week to apportion the coverts, as you might say, which each is to draw. The ground-floors of its houses are let out as black little wine-shops, coffee-shops, tinsmiths' and chandlers' shops. These I had seen and disapproved. But now I was to penetrate deeper into the arcana; and I did it not without excitement, for my transient view of the mystagogues who ruled there, got, so far from my inn windows, had asserted them to be Jews, procuresses, demireps, and unfortunates of all sorts and either sex. However, it appeared that my eyes had been too sweeping. The first floor of number —, for instance, announced a Captain of Light Horse—a perfectly reputable employment; the second floor had a card pinned to the door with the name Bazzi, Antinoö—I quarrelled with the Christian name; the third floor sheltered the Vedova Sassetti, who was a midwife; and the fourth, though

it did not say so, my Tortoni, Tertulliano, whom I suspected to be an old scoundrel.

He was bowing in his doorway as I reached it, bowing very low and making passes with his hands. He looked uncommonly like a hoary spider webbing me to my destruction, and I could fancy with what bright and avid eyes he would begin his meal—his *fera pasta*, like Ugolino's, upon the top of my head. He was quite without speech, but his hands were his eloquent apologists: backing and bowing, weaving his spells, he ushered me into a low white-walled room, where from an open window leaned a girl, her elbows upon the ledge, her eyes fixed upon the street below. I could see nothing of her except her back, which was clothed in a print blouse and green skirt, her hair lustrous black and built up into a tower, and, through the glass, her severe profile, like the head of Ligieia on a coin of Syracuse, silver-cold, remote, and keen. Not more aloof could Jezebel have showed as she looked down upon the Man of God in the courtyard than did this proud daughter of Tortoni, Tertulliano, upon the atoms two hundred feet or more below her feet.

This, then, was the position. My chattering, most agitated host was in misery which I could hardly guess at. He dared not call his daughter from the window, and could do nothing without her. He tried to make a joke of it, and me a party to the joke. He affected a mock despair—ruefully enough—and looked to see if I would take it. But I would not. Instead, I looked about me at a humble but perfectly decent room. A curtained bed was in a corner, a rep-covered

sofa against a wall. Above it hung a confectioner's almanac, which showed a young man, very *décolleté* in a blue and white vest and pink socks, rowing a lady in pale mauve up an Alpine waterfall. The lady had a scarlet parasol in one hand, a cigarette in the other, and boots which buttoned nearly to the knee. There was no

MARKET, SIENA.

doubt about that. The only other picture was a small card displaying a miraculous Madonna. She was crowned and had seven swords sticking into her heart. Gowns were no doubt concealed behind a second hanging curtain; a crucifix stood on a little table by itself: I think that was all. The whole establishment seemed to me scrupulously decent. I suppose it was very poor, but certainly I should never have noticed that had

not Livia chosen that I should; and when she brought herself into the midst of it, we might have been in the Palazzo del Magnifico.

Tortoni, Tertulliano, having attained what, apparently, was to be a *coup* of magnitude, was now in a hurry to say his *Nunc Dimittis*. In fact, he was too ready, and in fact he said it too soon. Badly in want of breath was he; he lifted and let fall his arms as if he were dandling a baby. Wits had left him as well as breath, and as for manners, what remained of them but some poor tattered instincts? "S'accommodi, s'accommodi," was all he had to say; and then, without showing me any accommodation at all, he threw up his hands like a man drowning. "Io non posso più!" I heard him wail, as he fled stumbling from the room. I heard him blunder downstairs: he had sought the sanctuary of the street. If one needed adventure by any chance—! I looked at the young queen by the window. One frail hand was on the sill, one slim finger just grated on it. I had nothing to say, and she intended to say nothing. What the deuce——! The comic edge of the crisis struck me, and I broke into innumerable laughter. She was very much puzzled; she frowned; but I suppose she saw that I was a human being and not a milch-cow. We very soon became friends; or if that is too great a word, reached that comfortable footing of intimacy where each is able, without effort, to get the best out of the other—as a free-will offering.

Livia, when you had got thus to know her, was an extremely innocent girl; I apply the word deliberately. Her self-possession was innocence.

She had character, knew what she wanted, and exactly how far she deserved to have it. She did not choose to make bargains with Providence on any but the greatest occasions of need; but she believed that if by some fortunate chance she got more than she deserved—why, that then she *had* deserved it. I have said that she was hot-tempered; she was, and proud too—as proud as a wound. She was proud of all sorts of things, but not of her beauty. This was, unhappily, too necessary a commodity of hers for any satisfaction to be in it. Certainly she was proud of being Sienese, though she always denied it. "What else could I be?" she used to say, which sounds arrogantly enough. But when I got to know her well, I found that her real pride lay deeper, and was the faster to hold because never sure of its ground. To fetch it up flame-hot there always needed to be some speck upon the object of it—just as you may make any girl blush by saying, There's a smut on your face. Livia's *contrada* was her darling pride, and upon that there were as many smuts as you choose to look for. She belonged, you must know, to Provenzano, to the *contrada della Giraffa*, a quarter of little fame, with a badge which had never brought luck. As a consequence, if you desired to see Livia at her fiercest, you either said of some one that he was "andato a Provenzano" (which is our "gone to the devil"), or spoke of the Palio as the peculium of Oca or Tartuca—the Quarter of the Goose, or that of the Tortoise.

Now, I never saw the Palio run in her company, and that is how I found her out. She said

that she didn't care to go, that it was too hot, that there were too many people; but she did go—there's the truth of it—she did go; and screamed *Giraffa!* with her neighbours, and with them had beleaguered her famous Madonna di Provenzano with petitions for weeks together. And when the race was over and the contrada of the Wave had won it, she sulked, and would not enter the church of her armless goddess. All this transparency flashing and flaunting under the eyes of a friend was too much for me; I roundly taxed her with it, and am glad now that I did. She saved one pride by means of another, in the prettiest way. For when I had cornered her, and got her to confess that her Giraffe never had won a palio, never entered, was not even required to enter in these days, she flew upon me with a vehemence beyond belief—asking what need, pray, had the Giraffe to struggle in a crowd of thieves and assassins, when everybody knew that the patroness of the whole stupid business was the Madonna of Provenzano—whose banner graced and crowned the field, without whom not a hand could be raised, not a vote cast; before whom every *ìnerbo* must be laid for benediction, every knee be bent for strength to be given? "And would it be a tolerable thing, a thing of decency, do you suppose"—she startled me: it was magnificent to see her fluttering nostrils as her scorn fanned them—"would it be decency that the sons of the patroness themselves should compete in the thing?" It is, of course, quite true that the armless Madonna of Provenzano is the queen of the Giraffa, and Foundress, in some degree, of the Palio.

I said, the Provenzani *had* competed; she waved her hand. Shame had killed their base desires. Nothing now would bring them to offer themselves for the *prova*. "Shame—yes, and Fear."

She came close to me, hissing the words in my ear. "Fear, signore. I'll tell you why. It is reasonable in every man who competes for this

HOUSE OF ST. CATHERINE.

thing, that he should desire to win it. Well, well then, do you not know that my people could bring home the Palio more times than Bellino ever did for his poor Tartuca?" Bellino was a famous rider, unbeaten, I believe. "More times!" cried Livia, appealing to the skies—"they would win it for ever. They could win it on the Last Day, if there was time."

I asked, how could this be? She bunched her fingers together, and bound them closely with thumb and forefinger of the other hand. "*By hiding our Madonna of Provenzano.* Then those others could do nothing—nothing at all. There is the truth." She rose up, majestic and inspired; she looked like a Herald Angel. The dialectic was superb—I could have kissed her foot.

When she had recovered her composure and was perfectly good-tempered, I got her to talk about her Madonna—which she would have done by the hour together. What I gathered was this much: Once the Lady of Provenzano had had a son, a Gesù of her own. It was true he was dead; but she carried him on her knees and tended him with her hands, fanning the flies away—and she was happy, although she had hardly any worship. She lived on the outside of a house in the piazza: very few people had noticed that she was there, but she had her dead Gesù—that was company enough.

But some enemies of hers—Spaniards, Florentines, Volterrani, Livia didn't know who, and cared nothing—broke through the Camollia Gate and murdered a *branca di gente* (a horde of people), and settled down in Provenzano, and went out shooting whenever they chose. One of these *birbanti*—ruffians by profession, I think she meant—became acquainted with a *donna allegra* of that quarter, and used to visit her; and this *donna allegra* lived in the piazza, just opposite to the Madonna, who was in the open air then, and nursed her dead Gesù day and night, and was happy, as I had been told. Well, this *birbante* was one day at the house of his

amica—that *donna allegra* she had been speaking of—and he was leaning out of the window—and I might be sure that his gun was handy. He was idle, had nothing to do; so presently his eye falls upon our Madonna across the way. "Tut!" says the *birbante*. "See how she nurses that carrion. I'll soon put a stop to that," says he. Whereupon he ups with his gun, pulls, and *pam!* he shoots the dead Gesù all to shivers, and blows into fine powder the Madonna's tending hands. The neighbours run out of doors, or look out of windows. "Who would be dead of that shot?" they ask each other. They look up and down, round about, they see nothing extraordinary—only the smoke of the gun floating up to the chimneys. Va benissimo. They return to their affairs; so also the *birbante*.

But the *donna allegra*, who happened to be alone that evening, about the *prima di notte* was leaning out of her window—not looking for anybody; just looking out into the warm evening and thinking of little or nothing. She was of a happy nature, living from day to day as best she could or as she must; and now she was certainly very happy; but—*cosa strana!* her eyes were full of tears, which flowed and flowed. They ran down her cheeks to her arms on the window, and in little streams down to the ground; but she let them run freely, since they seemed to make her happy. And the more they flowed the happier she became. And then the miracle occurred which I am about to tell you. Listen. There was this Giulia—that was the name of the *donna allegra*—crying softly to herself at the

window; and presently, down in the street, she hears, as it were, an echo of her own sweet grief —more gentle crying, and a low sobbing of words of grief: "O lasso! O poverina, chè faro? O lasso! Oimè!" She listened for a little—her own tears not ceasing to fall—and then, as if she knew what she was going to do, she goes to her door and down the stair, and steps across the piazza, and stops in front of the house opposite to her own, and looks up, and says: "Buona pasqua, Madonna Santissima. Chè hai?"

"Oimè!" says the Madonna; "they have taken away my son."

"Eh," says La Giulia, "but you know that that had to be. He is gone to Paradise; and that is where your ladyship will find him."

"They shot him, Giulia," says the Madonna; "and my arms which held him,—see, they are gone too."

Giulia looked up through the dusk—and it was as I tell you. Her arms were shot clean away at the shoulders.

La Giulia cried out: "Oh, the assassins! Oh, the cut-throat dogs! Who has done this blasphemy?"

"It was your *caro amico*, Giulia," says the Madonna.

Giulia looked at the white Madonna and knew that she could not lie, even if she would. Then she ground her teeth together, and cursed the *birbante* in a low voice. "Lo pigli' un' accidente," she said—and it came true, as she learned the next day; for the *birbante* had his neck broken in a fight, being thrown out of an upper window. "But," says La Giulia, "if you

have lost a son you have gained a daughter; and if your arms are gone, my heart has come back."

She made her reverence, and went about the piazza from house to house, calling her neighbours and friends, women all, of her own profession. "Come all of you," she said; "come this moment. A miracle has happened. The Madonna is

SIENA.

crying for her son: we must be her daughters. Come, and bring tapers." So all those women came out with lighted tapers and made a great ring round about the maimed Madonna, and joined hands, singing Laudi and the Litany of the Virgin; and kept all the hours, and never left off the rosary. And whomsoever passed by, whether man or woman, they compelled to kneel

and say the *Ave Maria*, and lay down a quattrino in honour of their Madonna.

This nightly devotion went on for many weeks of the summer, until the Madonna, being comforted, was grateful, and her gratitude, taking the heavenly form, was noised all over the city. For she made many notable miracles among women, healing them when they were sick, turning their hearts, and the like. And soon there was enough treasure to build the fine church, which you can see any day you please in the Piazza di Provenzano; within which, when it was finished, she herself was carried upon the shoulders of lords and cardinals, under the eyes, as Livia believes, of the Holy Father. Upon that great festa a palio was run in her honour, and a man of the Giraffa won it, and presented it to her. And so, by degrees and degrees, nobody dared enter for the palio without seeking her benediction, or vowing her a heart, or whatsoever he could find that would please her. Livia here bent her brows at me. "This is why she is the greatest of all the Madonnas of Siena, and the Giraffa, which contains her, the greatest of all the *contrade*."

"And you love her, Livia?"

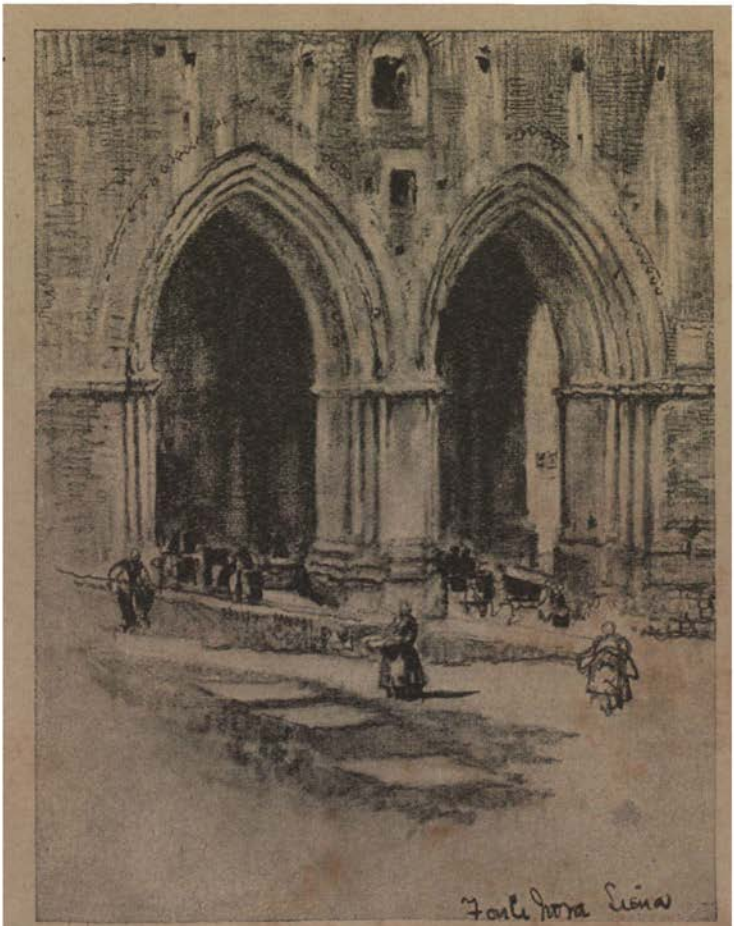
"Già," said Livia; "we all love her. But I shall love her more when I am older."

I objected. "Why so? You cannot be too young, I suppose, to love her."

"No," said Livia. "But it is more convenient to love her afterwards—and she quite understands."

I hope she did—in fact, I know she did, though Livia didn't think so. I remember that

I ended the conversation by saying: "Livia, Livia, I am going to prophesy. I prophesy that



FONTE NUOVA, SIENA.

there will be a miracle. But you must love the Madonna extremely."

Livia turned away her head. "Come," I said, rising. "Take me to see her now."

"I think I will not," she replied; but after a while she proposed it herself, as if she had suddenly thought of it.

The Madonna of Provenzano is in a niche, high over the altar of her somewhat gaudy temple. Every visitor to Siena must be familiar with her pinched white face and sunken eyes, her veil, her crown, her cuirassed, armless trunk. To see this magnificent young Livia kneel stiffly there, the picture of health and bodily perfection, and look steadily up at her woe-begone divinity, and gravely and familiarly talk to her, was to be assured of what I asserted before, of Livia's innocent mind. The Madonna di Provenzano, patroness of *donne allegre!* They all come to her in time. Upon this occasion the talk between mistress and servant was very grave. Livia was pale; she had shawled her head to enter the church, and now drew the lace close about her chin. Conversation, slow to begin, grew very earnest; Livia seemed to be arguing with the Madonna, rather hot for her own opinion, not willing to be convinced. A footfall sounded in the church, she looked round, she touched my shoulder. "See, see," she said. "Here is old Imperia; watch what she does." A very wizened, partly mad old woman with wandering grey hair came in upon her crutches, curtsied to the Madonna of Provenzano, and then, suddenly, changed her mind, or seemed to change it, and went out again. "We must follow her," said Livia. "Come." And she took my arm. We went, very slowly (for Imperia had to drag one leg), up the hill to the

Servite Church. Imperia entered; we followed. She knelt close to a sepulchre where, behind an iron *grille*, was a ghastly waxen image of the dead Christ: her face was transfigured, she was in an ecstasy. She kissed her old hand seven times to the Seven Wounds, and "Good day," she whispered—"Good day, my Lord Christ. I have seen Thy mother. She bids her love to Thee." I felt Livia tremble where she knelt near by me. When Imperia was gone, she hid her face for a while, and I saw her shoulders shake. But her eyes were calm and quite dry when she showed them again; she was exceedingly grave. "I have seen Imperia often in our church," she said, "but never here. Now I know what her duty is—and whose is this Cristo. This is a strange thing. Go away now. I wish to be alone."[1]

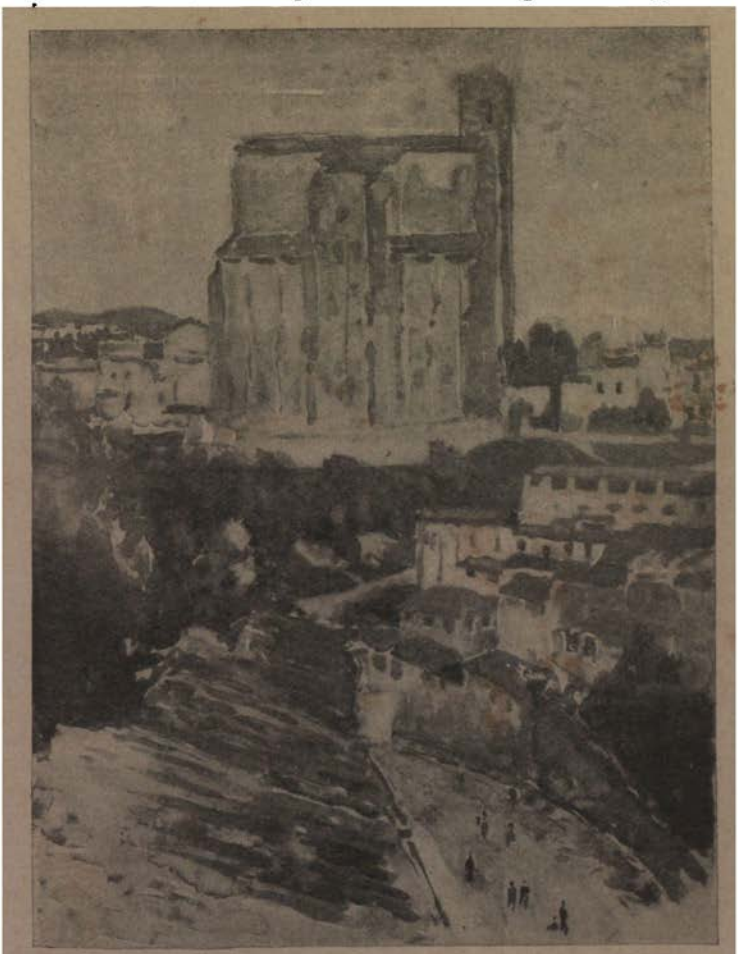
A change came over her from this hour, but I must delay to speak of it until I have remembered many things. She took me to visit the other Sienese Madonnas—her, for instance, of the Maestà, the Madonna delle Grazie, as she is called, done by Duccio, I believe—a solemn, stupid-looking goddess. Livia told me that she was sterile now, though she had many times saved Siena from enemies. But that was long ago, long before they moved her out of the

[1] It was after this—shortly—that I asked Livia to sing to me. She laughed and shook her head. I said that I had heard girls sing in the mountains, of their lovers: "Ho colto un giglio," etc. Her eyes grew hard. She lowered the lids so that I should not see them. But I had seen them; they were like dark jade. "We do not sing of lovers in Provenzano," she said, low; "but we sing when we have to, and to those who demand it of us." "But if I demand it, Livia?" She shot a quick chill glance at me, then stiffened her neck. "You! you do not demand. No, no. I shall never sing to you." I didn't ask her any more for songs. But here is evidence of change for an astute reader.

Duomo. Since they had put her in the Opera no one came to do her service, and therefore she worked no miracles. I don't wonder at it. It is a thing which we may reflect upon, the number of barren deities there must be in the Accademia across the way. There they are, crowded together for tourists to gape at: but where were they once? Poor ladies, dry-boned and hard-eyed, who prays before them now, or gives them hearts or tapers? Who kisses them, or holds them out shaking hands? It is a thing which we may reflect upon at our leisure, that to make our holiday we have robbed God of His people and these people of their gods. Mr. Such-an-one and Professor That-other, measuring the metacarpus of a thin hand or two, will tell us immediately who made them, or who did not. Bah! I want to know whom they made—what young Livias, what old Imperias. It seems to me that you have more right to take a man's heart out of his body than his god out of his heart. The thieves we are! Let us think of the sterile Madonna in the Opera and what that may mean before we exalt the great Duccio at the expense of the great Cimabue.

But the Madonna "of the Great Eyes," in the Capella del Voto, is (if I may be pardoned a term from the orchard) in full bearing. She does not want for children. Her shrine is ablaze with tapers, stuck all over with hearts, chains, and badges. Both she and her Bimbo have rare crowns. Livia had to allow that she did wonders. So also did the Madonna del Manto, whom the laundresses of Fontegiusta serve, and so the famed Madonna of the Servites. But she "of the Snows," in a little church of her own, a sad-browed,

pensive, pretty lady, does nothing. Livia thought little of her, although she could urge nothing to



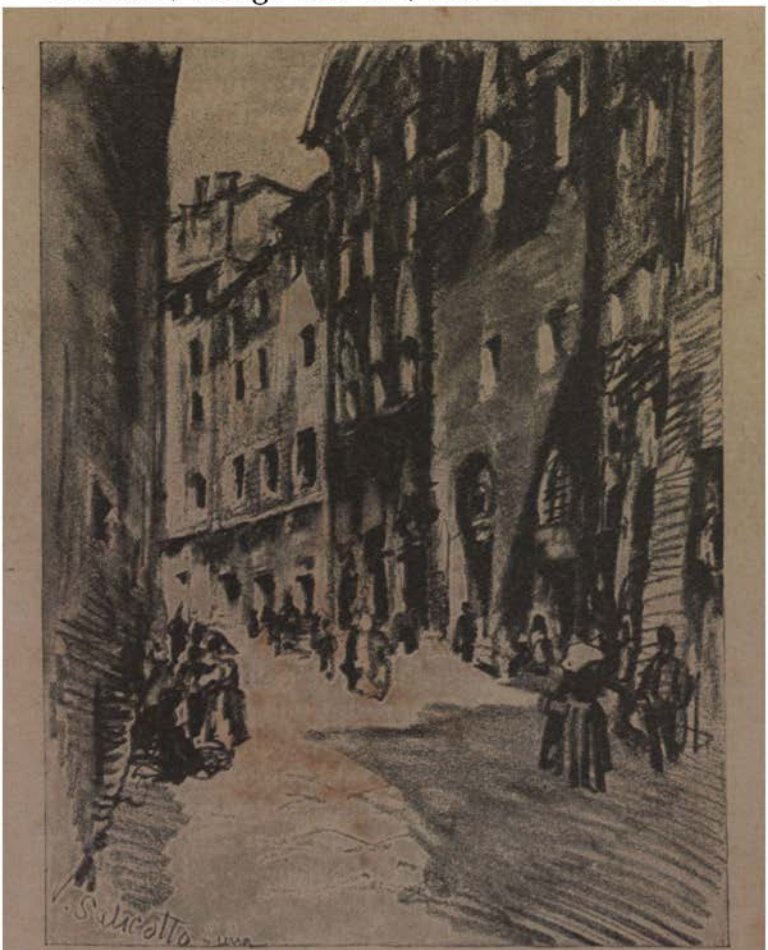
SAN DOMENICO, SIENA.

her discredit. "She is nothing—she is nothing at all," she kept drumming into my ears as we

walked to the church; and she would not kneel to her when she got there. "Why, what can she do?" she cried, directly we were in the street again. "You see what she is. She has no curtain before her. She is *roba di galleria*—a thing for show." I said that she was a beauty. "Pooh," said Livia,—"what has beauty to do with the matter? It is the heart you want, and the kind eyes. She has neither—she is nothing. I never heard of a single thing that she did." And let our artists take this to mind, that there is no instance of a show Madonna having worked a miracle. The Madonnas of the Goldfinch, of the Grand Duke, of the Garden; Del Sarto's blowzy wench of the Sack, all the Botticelli, Lippo Lippi, Titian flower-beds—have they any gilt hearts? Not one.

But I must get nearer to Livia's private affair—that question whether or no she would allow herself to love her Madonna—which I very well knew was going on. I saw much less of her: that was one proof. When I did see her she was extremely silent: that was another. Then, on a day in May, she inducted me, much against her will, into the Glories of the Goose. It was the Vigil of Saint Catherine, who, of course, belonged to that quarter, and to whom Livia, like all the Sienese whomsoever, paid certain if grudging honour. An Ocaiola she certainly had been—this saintly lady—but also a Sanese; a great saint indeed who, had she been of the Giraffa, would have been a serious rival of the armless Madonna. But, secure in the possession of that Puissance, Livia could afford to be generous to Santa Caterina. Much of this I had to urge before she would accept my escort to

San Domenico, that great rude church on the headland; and go she did; but it is worth while



VIA SALICOTTO, SIENA.

remarking, that she would not wear her festal gear. Neither straw hat, nor silk gown, nor

filigree hairpins, nor necklace would she put upon herself. She chose to go in her every-day wear, hatless, in a print bodice and green stuff skirt, in white stockings, and cloth slippers which clattered at every step. This made her more than commonly conspicuous, though (to be sure) there were few of the Ocaiole of figure so superb or carriage at once so easy and so strong. No doubt but she knew that. She was the observation of everybody and the lure of not a few; yet I declare upon my heart and conscience that she went through her phases of curiosity, enthusiasm, and religious profit-seeking just for all the world as if there had been nobody in that thronging church but herself, Saint Catherine's head, and a *frate* or two. Now, properly digested, that is a very extraordinary thing, that a fine girl should be so unconscious, or so negligent, of admiration. Imagine a girl of our own people under such fire. Just imagine it!

I said that Livia showed, with all the rest, curiosity, enthusiasm, and religious profit-seeking. Not only were these the phenomena, but this was the order of their manifestation upon this vigil when, in San Domenico, they expose the relics of St. Catherine, and honour them by a sermon and a procession of children. For, first, she was very curious to see the saint's head, which is exhibited to the faithful in a shrine of flowers and starry candles. She pushed for a place in front, she stood tiptoe, gazed with all her serious eyes at the little brown mummy. A woman's poor shrunken head, it seemed to me, crowned by some ghastly travesty of honour with a bridal wreath. The agony still tight upon the lips and

blind eyes: this was what I could see, and soon tired of. But that adoring, praying, appealing, straining crowd saw, or hoped to see, much more. They held up their arms, they nodded and wagged their own quick heads, they whispered to it fast and familiarly. Mothers held up their children, who crowed and cheered to see the bright lights. Fathers taught their boys how to cross themselves, and got them so much into the habit of it that I saw some afterwards wandering about the spaces of the church performing the signature incessantly, as if it had been a new game. Meanwhile our tall Livia devoured the relic with her eyes, neither praying to it, nor moving her arms towards it, nor holding out her devotion in her two hands.

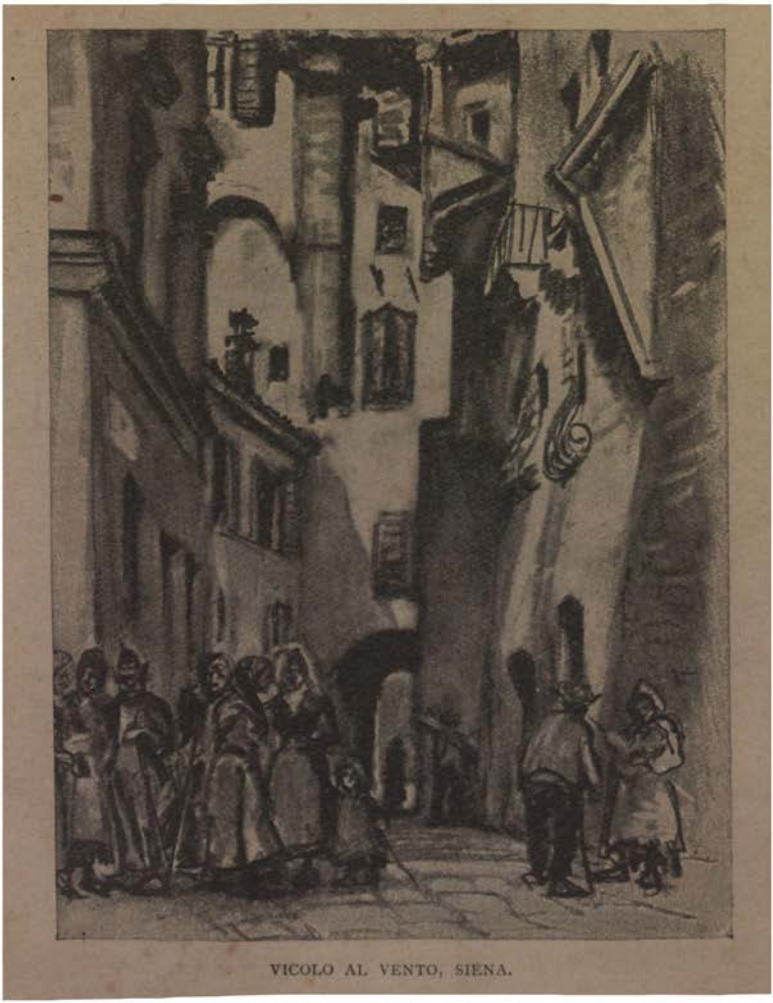
"*E piccola*," she said, "she's a little thing to be espoused to Christ—*ma pure bellina*, but she's rather pretty all the same," which I should never have called her. She had used the same phrase of her own trim waist, the reader may remember; and one admission was as sincere as the other. Enthusiasm had not come upon her yet. Although she knelt and moved her lips, Livia was not praying. I had seen her talk secrets with the Madonna of Provenzano, and I knew she was not praying now.

It was the procession which called up her emotion—a procession which followed a car decked with paper roses and bearing a monstrance of silver. In that there was a brown finger of the poor dead. A straggling, straying procession it was, of children with tapers and guild-brethren with torches, which fought a way for itself round the church to the music of a fitful chant. Worse

singing I have seldom heard, nor have I ever seen more imminent conjunction of candle-flames and muslin veils. The monotony of the chant also beggars description: it was a single phrase repeated for ever and ever; and yet I saw Livia's nostrils flutter in the quick draught of her breath, and her bosom stirring like a short sea. As the singers came near her, she began to thrill a little; but they passed by a dumb Livia; and then came the young men, roaring like bulls in a market. It was then that she too began to sing, like one inspired, full-throated as a nightingale, from whom her notes well like honey from a jug. Now indeed the girl was on fire; and the thought jumped high within me that there were the makings of a saint in this girl of Provenzano. I did not then know how soon the armless Madonna intended to enfold her, nor in what guise.

To this noble rage of praise succeeded self-seeking in my friend, a frank desire to get for herself what she could out of her exaltation: a thing really not shocking at all, but part of the strange affair which religion is. To Livia's mind there is a bargain to be made in church just as anywhere else, to the striking of which will go—what goes in the market-place—finesse, confidence, ready-mindedness, shrewdness; in fact, all the qualities which make a good chafferer outmatch a bad one. Enthusiasm for the business is also material. Who ever heard of a man prospering at his trade who did not think it better to be a good boat-builder or market-gardener than to command armies in the field or build St. Peter's of Rome? So your church-

chafferer will sing "*O Crux, Spes Unica*," with the best, and expect to be rewarded with the



VICOLO AL VENTO, SIENA.

best. So Livia, having shrilled her lauds of St. Catherine, took her place in the file, that she

might pass before the relic, speak to it—and be heard.

She formed one of what seemed an endless chain, and her demeanour differed from none of her companions'. There were no more lauds, no more prayers. No, but everybody had his petition ready, and everybody made it, kneeling as he passed by the head, and kissing it in, as you may say, when he had lodged it. I saw Livia kneel and speak her torrential whispers—what a flood of passion in them! I saw her stoop and kiss the shrine—and her look at the relic, *Now, it is a bargain, mind.* The moment she was past and in the church again she was her usual recollected, beautiful self. It was all over. Next day was the festa, with great doings in the street; but she would not go to San Domenico again. She went to mass at Provenzano, and afterwards saw with me the street procession up the Via Fontebranda, and the flagging of certain favoured Ocaioli by the *alfieri* of the quarter. I shall not insist upon this spectacle, except to say that, to Livia, it had no religious significance at all, although the mummers were in sacred guise, and the centre of all was a silver statue of St. Catherine. The mystery was her marriage to our Saviour, the persons all enacted by children. She hardly looked at them. The hymn which had so stirred her before left her dumb; the children were now brats; the whirling flags, the jaunty, lithe young man in striped hose and green and yellow doublet, who manipulated them, was a "slug of Fontebranda"—and why? Because every house in the street bore a jutting goose over its door; because the flags were red,

white, and green, and the banner bore in its midst a crowned goose; because, in fact, all this was the Glory of the Goose. St. Catherine was become an Ocaiola again, and Livia could not

A STREET IN SIENA.

bear it. As soon as the procession had passed she begged me to excuse her. It was not convenient for her to remain any longer; she had only come because I had asked her. She hoped I would stay, if such things amused me. We should meet again, no doubt. I said that I

hoped so, and she disappeared. I may as well say at once that I did not see her again for many a year.

At the end of the procession I was much astounded to find the gallant young flag-waver standing before me. His glories of green and yellow, his stripes, his curls, his little red cap, made it a public ceremony: but everything is done publicly in Tuscany. He bowed and saluted. "A thousand excuses, sir," he said, "but that girl who was with you——"

"Yes?"

"Sir, she is my *amica*."

Now I had never known that before; but—poor Livia—why not?

"Sir," continued the *alfiere*, "I have lately made her highly honourable proposals—namely, of marriage. But last evening, sir, she refused them. Now, sir——"

"Sir, in my turn," I said, "I can assure you——" He put up his hand.

"Nothing more, I beg you, sir, he said. "I know exactly what you would be pleased to say, and can only assure you that no such words are necessary. But I must inform you further that Livia refused me, nevertheless, on your account."

I was greatly surprised. He assured me, however, that Livia's belief was that I and the Madonna of Provenzano between us desired her to be a nun. Thereupon I told him what I did most ardently desire for her—which was to marry himself or any other honest man. I believe I convinced him by the most obvious means: at any rate, we finished the evening together at the Caffè Greco, and he left me full of hope and

promise. I was not so hopeful as he was, for my firm conviction then was that she had refused him because he was an Ocaiolo.

I did not see my friend again for six years: it was last May that we met. She was looking extremely handsome and sedate, and told me that she had four children and that her husband was a fool. He certainly showed no folly in marrying Livia; and she, I may in any case remark, seems of apostolic mind in suffering him gladly. One question which I asked her was answered by another from her.

"Will you tell me, Livia," was my question, "whether, when you were married, you gave a good gilt heart to Madonna di Provenzano?"

Livia looked me full in the face, without a flush or quiver.

"Why should I?" was her question.

CHAPTER XXV

VAL D' ARBIA: BUONCONVENTO—MONTE OLIVETO—SAN QUIRICO—PIENZA

SIENA, like a rustic beauty, too shy to pursue and yet unwilling to be left, follows the traveller for nearly twenty miles of his southerly road, with long looks and enchanting glances of her blushing face. As everything about this place is lovely you will accept without surprise the winding road to the gate, a road hemmed deeply in lemon and white, laburnums and acacias in flower, the colour of a mass-priest's vestment. The huge double gate—port and antiport—which closes in this fragrant alley, bears upon its outward face a tall sheet of fresco of Sano di Pietro's, which you can see for a quarter of a mile of your course, one of those gracious off-shoots of the Catholic religion which all men must admire: the proper pride of it, the loyalty and dead-certainty, which make sure that the incomer will rejoice in its gods, and that its gods shall be the beginning and the end of his sojourn. Here you have a stooping Virgin, in her blue mantle and robe of cream brocade, a courtly, fair King Christ leaning forward to crown her: noble

Afterthoughts of Siena.

belief, nobler witness! And while you watch this solemnity Siena herself rises above it, rose-colour and purple, crowned with ivory and grey; and you see the Mangia tower, like the lance of an outlying vedette, keeping guard, as well it may, over the road. For you are now upon the high-way to Rome. Across this broken plain marched

S. QUIRICO, MONTE AMIATA.

the Orvietani, and robber-lords from Grosseto, Pietra, Corneto, as often as the Papal battalions. Those far dim hills—Monte Amiata, Monte Labbro, Monte Civitella, and the rest of them have all held enemies. Siena disputed this country with her neighbours. The end of her high pretences and their deep claims you know by now.

From the embanked road, which at first you follow, you will see, left of your way, the naked lists of Montaperto, whose mounds and dykes of mud, whose tortured pale hills, still writhing under the fierce volcanic stress, are a foretaste of what is to confront you for many a league—a rolling grey plain edged at the extreme distance by violet hills; stone pines upon lonely eminences; cypresses in rows, leading to chapel or farmhouse; empty pastures; here and there a slow shepherd with his flock straying dejectedly behind him—

The South.

> A uno, a due, a tre; e l' altre stanno
> Timidette atterrando l' occhio e 'l muso—

man and beasts all of the drab of the soil. A great horizon, a sea of grey land, patched like the sea with the shadow of a cloud or chance gleam of light; here a blot of crimson clover, there a field of peas in flower: far off, but winding nearer, a cloud of dust. A streak of dusty road, like some ship's wake, leads you on: over all is a white, unquenchable sky. You are going south, and everything above or about you assures you of it—to the land where men, trees, beasts and their abodes are prone to the mid-day sun. All this you may see as from a platform, as slowly your road drops down to mulberry-trees and the plain. Hereabouts you reach Isola, a village of whitewashed tenements, with never a glass window to the whole, and a *trecento* church the shape of a barn. A line of poplars testifies to the Tressa brook, which soon joins the Arbia; and at Ponte a Tressa, a long pink village with two stone pines to give it character, and a golden

maze of vineyards beyond it, the two rivers touch and mingle, and take you to Buonconvento and beyond. You pass Monterone d' Arbia, a prosperous town where the hospital of La Scala, in the old days, had a mill, and built a tower to guard it. The tower still stands—a glum fortress over a brook, and served Marignano in 1554 as a

MONTAPERTO, SIENA.

base of his operations against Siena. Not far on is Lucignano, a beautiful place on a cypress-wooded mount, a turreted, battlemented little rock of offence. Largely populated now by donkeys, which they breed and export,[1] it possesses a green hill-side, a weeping-willow, and a fountain of spring-water, by which you may sit to eat your breakfast, and see far

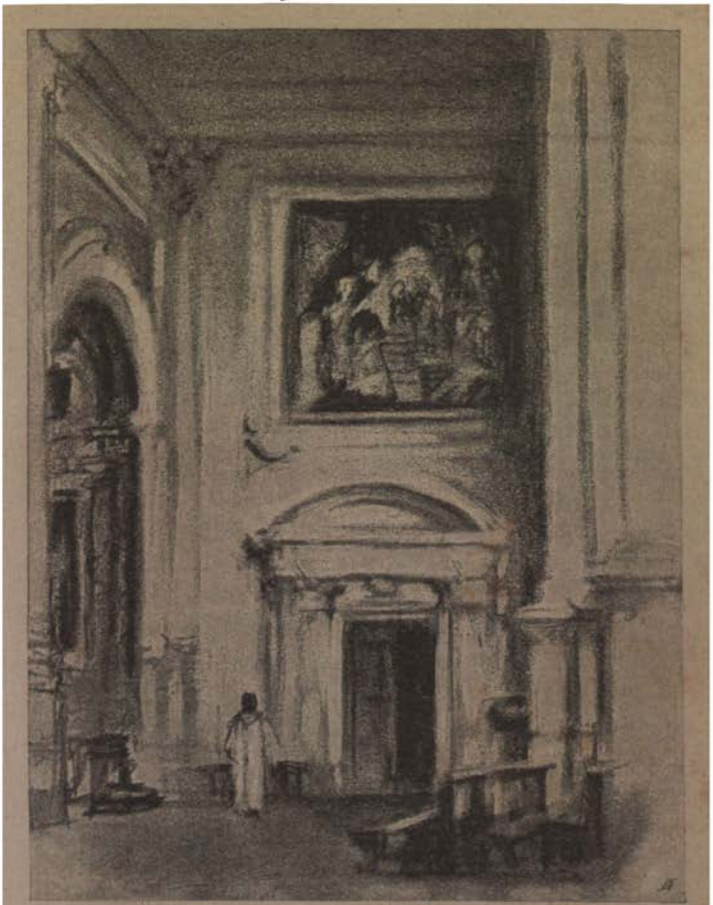
Comfort at Lucignano.

[1] You may see herds of them at pasture, like sheep, in the fields.

north of you Siena, like a crimson cloud-cap to her ridge. The spring comes out of the rock on which Lucignano stands, the fountain is recessed in a cave, by no means without art. It is figured as a bountiful woman standing there. Moss clothes her to the middle, and the water gushes out of her breasts. It was pretty to see the hedgers and vine-tenders come up to drink—children at the bosom of their mother. For here is a Pan-Italian picture, if you please: earth moulded in the shape of every man's mother, and men, like children, running to her for solace in the day's round. Italy, by no means unaware of the aspect of the things she makes, will show you many emblems like this of retired Lucignano; and so will other countries I daresay. The figure of man or woman squirting water—if you must reduce it to that—is pretty common and mostly disagreeable. In Italy only, this pathetic fancy, this glimpse of the mortal things which stir the mind, tinges the poor images with an artless grace which makes them real. Art or religion, which are these parables? Heaven knows there is mighty little difference in this country. You will see fountains like this in the great cities: in Brussels you will see one, which is considered much more remarkable, bragging of its impudence in the street. But in what village of what other country will you find it hidden away in a cave upon the bare hill-side, to be of service only to the thirsty vine-dressers, who use it every day? In none alive at this hour, I dare affirm: but once before, in Greece, you would have found it.

With Lucignano the hills begin; from it you

will follow a valley road. You pass Seravalle, a famous Sienese outpost, block of a fortress, with-



IN THE CHURCH, MONTE OLIVETO.

out form and void; you pass Ponte d' Arbia; and then you reach Buonconvento, a brave, square, and walled town, banked above the Ombrone, with a river-side

Buonconvento.

piazza of planes and chestnuts, a complete circuit of walls, and a belfry with a graceful tall cupola rising above them.

Here that most unhappy Cæsar, Henry of Luxemburgh, who was to do every wonderful thing desired by Dante, and did not one—that

> Alto Arrigo, ch' a drizzare Italia
> Verra in prima ch' ella sia disposta,

came in 1313 to die, and did that suddenly[1] and thoroughly, while the Sienese were manning their walls against him and the Florentines just quitting theirs. There were, and there are still, medicinal waters near by in which a man might wash and be made whole; but nothing, it seems, could keep this one's bones from rotting. Extraordinarily futile prophecy of Dante's! But it is the fate of poets to personify functions, and judge a man as great as his profession. Into the Cæsarean office Dante read all the forces of Julius and Augustus, which made that office potent. Very soon after he had penned it the sad-browed Florentine must have known it vain; and not so long after that again he was to know whether the sequel had been any more true. You may remember it: how Beatrice, being with her lover in the very Rose of heaven, in the very burning centre of that Rose, drew him towards her with her look of one who would speak and is silent—

> Qual' è colui che tace e dicer vuole,

[1] So suddenly, that rumour fixed his death in poison, administered (*disait-on*) by a Dominican in the sacrament. There is no truth in the surmise, but much probability. The rumour itself is evidence of that. The curious may see his effigy in the Pisan Campo Santo—that of a tall man with a heavy bovine face.

and showed him a seat empty in the convent of White Stoles. In that high seat, said she—

> In quel gran seggio a che tu gli occhi tieni
> Per la corona che già v' è su porta,
> Prima che tu a queste nozzi ceni,
> Sederà l' alma, che fia giù angosta,
> Dell' alto Arrigo . . .

If great Henry sat so high, it was that the lowly might be exalted. But it avails little to wonder what Dante said, and what missed, in that world whither he must fare twice.

This I will add of Buonconvento, that it has a good kitchen and a friendly inn, and this yet again, that if you wish to see Tolomei's Abbey—a notable outcrop of Siena—it is here that you will turn off the Via Romana for a climb of seven miles along a finely contoured road, not yet ten years old.

Chiusure, a little red village, stands upon a hill of some 3000 feet above the sea; Monte Oliveto Maggiore is on a spur a little below it, only to be reached by descending and ascending a mile of woody glen. To make the ascent you climb round two gorges, deep romantic valleys whose shelves and pinnacles are browsed by goats (while the herd-boys and girls flit in and out of the thickets, fauns and Oreads upon their everlasting business); and so by painful degrees you make the convent. For such a site—high in the clouds and winds, lifting out of an oak forest—the place looks red and raw as you come near it. It is, in fact, uncompromisingly ugly, without ivy, or lichen, or moss, or any of the funguses which make gardens of our old roofs. The church tower has a Lombard look in its

The climb to Oliveto.

sharp casing of red brick; it is square and has the conical Lombard cap. The gateway is like the entry of a castle, turreted, crenellated, and doubled-doored. You receive a jar hereabouts, a jerk to your tenderer feelings from which you hardly recover, though Virgin and Child welcome you in, and San Benedetto (on the convent side) sends you forward with a blessing. The gate is at the summit of the rock; a gorge glooms on three sides out of four; you must go down a long avenue of ilex to the edge of the fourth gorge upon the very brink of which the convent hangs. There you find it, a great, bare, draughty house, outside all red and inside all white; naked as a bride and clean to distraction. You will have a simple reception, plain food and a cold bed. Almost certainty you will experience a tearing night-wind, rattling windows, slamming doors, calling of owls and night-hawks, a morning of tempest—beating rain, clouds blotting up Monte Amiata and all the hill towns. Here at least is my recollection of Monte Oliveto Maggiore, which the blessed Bernardo Tolomei founded in 1313, and which a Sodoma painted, but did not adorn.

They have stripped the place nearly bare of the many fine things it no doubt contained. Among others, the library is but a shell, the pharmacy a wreck. The over-vaunted frescoes are in part effective, in a swagger they have and a bright air of audacity, as if they wondered that they were there and were vowed to carry it off. Where this is so, they are by Signorelli and his friends. The rest are set down to Sodoma, but if some of them are

The convent.

not by Pinturicchio, they are inane enough, trite and feeble enough, insincere enough to be his.

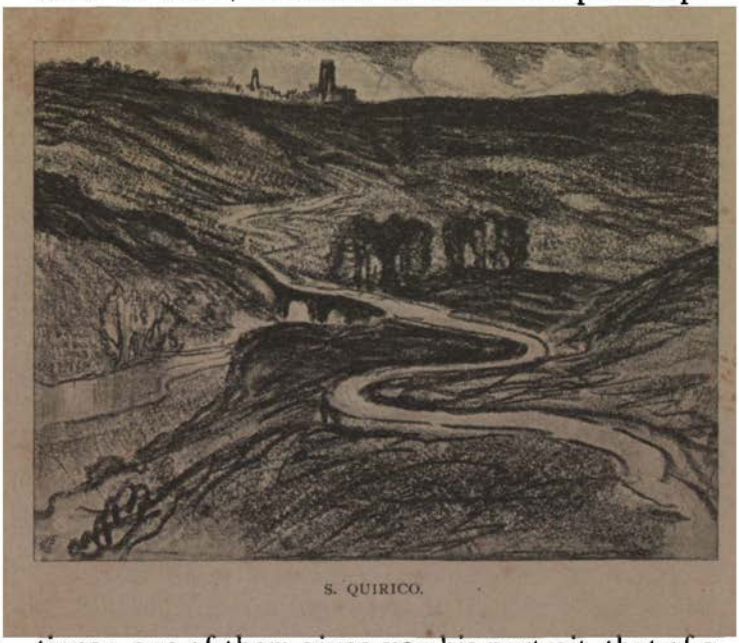
THE COUNTRY AT MONTE OLIVETO.

The border line between simplicity and simper is an extremely narrow one. The Florentines

never stepped over it; for the moment they had grown out of the nursery they became absorbed in other pursuits. They became curious, as with Pollajuolo; or pretentious, as with Fra Bartolommeo; or meretricious, as with Andrea del Sarto; but they never regretted the nursery and the fairy tales, and never tried to think themselves back in that sweet and sunny place. The Sienese were saved by their limitations: when they ceased to find their joy in patterns they ceased art altogether. It was otherwise with the Umbrians. That Perugino was too old for the nursery is manifest in his portraits; but he had the force of passion behind his fancy to put him there again. His great pieces remain primitive to the very last. Pinturicchio, with no fancy at all, copied the nursery work of his predecessors with a deadly precision which spreads death to the beholder. The absence of vital fancy makes all his things false. They are frozen—as in the library of the Sienese cathedral—or they simper as here. The rest are undoubtedly Sodoma's—boys, baggages, and spiritual erotics. I take leave to say of this whole cloisterful of frescoes that it is nearly worthless. It is a report of the life of Saint Benedict by chroniclers who neither knew nor had considered of the great Norcian;[1] it consists of transcripts of every-day life in the *Quattrocentro* made by hacks who were either too frivolous or

[1] Mr. Edmund Gardner, an instructed and amiable writer, upon whose learning I put my trust, in a recent book upon Siena, makes the best of these miserable things. He recounts all the miracles which they do their best to make absurd, and exclaims that he would like more of them if there were a Signorelli or a Sodoma to paint them. I will pass Signorelli; but as to the Sodomesque miracles I shall ask him to remember Gozzoli's in the Campo Santo of Pisa when he revises this fervent page.

too dull to delight in it. As illustration, if I am right, they fail altogether; as decoration, it is a matter of taste; but to me they have neither the goldsmithery of Siena nor the vivacity and distinction of Florence. Drab-coloured, flabby inanity they appear to me. They do contain, some of them, evidence of Sodoma's preoccupa-



S. QUIRICO.

tions; one of them gives you his portrait, that of a narrow-eyed, scowling, red-lipped temple of evil humours, ministered unto by badgers and languishing young Ganymedes. One may leave them.

Out of that severe test of adversity which is the ordeal by fire of all systems, the Roman Catholic religion has never failed to come—the better. That being the fact, and the man having been what he was, it is unnecessary to say that

the fragrance of the life and conversation of the Abbate di Negro is still fresh about these empty halls; and it is only proper to add, that in the present head of the house he has, in every respect, his best successor—an accomplished, courtly, humorous gentleman, a Settignanese and a Christian. He told me—what was very evident

CHURCH, S. QUIRICO.

—that the Government had laid hands on everything but the church and its actual site. The monks are left there on the understanding that they are to be innkeepers to travellers. They have been deprived of the means, they are estopped of all but the desire of doing good to the peasantry scattered—like dropt acorns—about these uncouth bare valleys. Politically, this is

inevitable; socially, unfortunate; charitably speaking, it is monstrous. One hoped better things for him and his flock, and said one's "Speriamo!" And, "Eh!" said he, "speriamo sempre!" and looked up out of the window with twinkling, patient eyes. I repeat, a brave gentleman, a Settignanese, and a Christian.[1]

San Quirico.

San Quirico d' Orcia owns a magnificent approach, a square, grey tower, and a Lombardesque church, which for dignity, curious beauty, and venerable aspect should be hard to match. Once the place was called San Quirico in Osenna; I never could learn why; but it has a fine sound of angelic heights which befits the austere sanctuary on a hill-top that it is. It prospers, and has an English air; staunch stone houses line the streets, clean, well-to-do, and middle-class; a busy market, drovers in gigs; a commodious inn with flowers in its balconies, where one lives wondrous well; a mansion for a squire, and, truly, a park, with park-gates opening upon the market-place. The house is a palace of the Chigi, who were marquesses of San Quirico; one Cardinal Flavio laid out the park. It has overgrown his designs, spilled itself over the pale, and is now a soft wilderness of moss-grown glades, dense ilex-woods, grass run riot, a tangle of orchids and wild gladiolus. Save for some maimed statues

[1] What are you to do? The convent pharmacy is destroyed, lest with drugs for the body should be instilled drugs in the mind. No doubt, the Olivetans would work against the ruling order: so long as a nation has a "National Church" which is by no means national, that must occur. There is but one remedy. If the nation will not go to Church, the Church must go to the nation. Humankind no longer believes that Almighty God can be shut up within four walls.

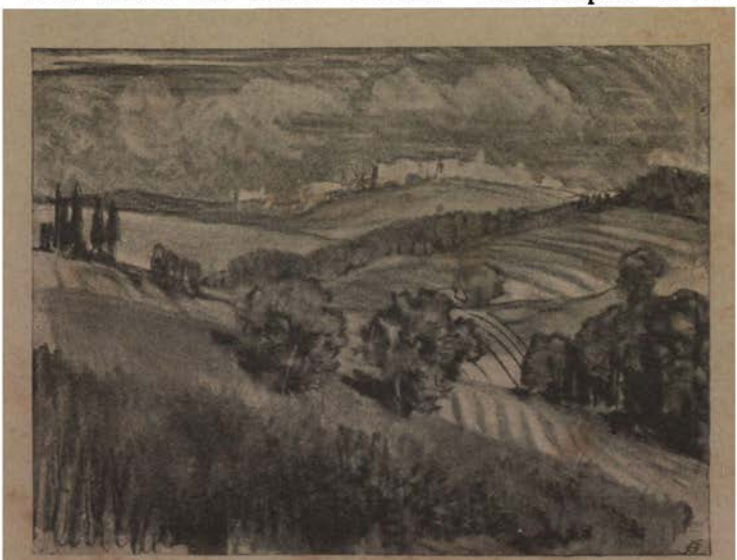
of Pan and old Sylvanus, half-dressed in lichen and fern, the birds have it all to themselves. Prosperous, wholesome, windy little town, full of friendly people, weatherwise, and honest—you will leave it with regret.[1]

Æneas Sylvius Piccolomini, the great Sienese Pope Pius II., thought to glorify himself and his

[1] The story of San Quirico (which I put discreetly here, that my impression may remain for what it is worth) is that of any one of these little hill-towns; but it so happens that an illustration is at hand. Some few miles along the road, between Pienza and Montepulciano, you may see an example of the thing, frozen in the doing, as it were. There is a Piccolomini castle there,—a stupendous, red, embattled keep with lower buildings about it,—a little church, a line of huts near by. Here, then, is the nucleus of your hill-town. Some Teuton robber descended into Italy with his lord,—were he Pepin or another,—marked this eminence, and the valleys it commanded, with his eye. He built himself this tower, took a fief of the empire, and held up his sword to Cæsar's name once a year. For his people he bought or stole women to be their wives and servants; Italians they. He built them huts close to his tower; he built them a church; this brought in the priest. There were raids, forays, they lived on plunder. But in that way lived every tenant of every rock in Tuscany; so our man must build a wall. He might build a dozen: within that wall was built-in the seed of discord; within was to be enacted the story which you will have had written large in every chapter of this volume; for, observe, he had built in the priest and his God-in-four-walls. The tenantry were the commune; the chief looked to Cæsar; the priest touched hands with Rome. Between these three the strife was to be until Cæsar or Peter prevailed. Then it was the turn of another to enter and take seisin. If the lord were wise he made terms with a greater lord. Cæsar was far off, but Cæsar's vicar would protect him. If the priest were wise, the Pope put the little burgh under his garment. According as the commune inclined to one or another would be the opportunity of Guelf city or Ghibelline, of Florence or of Siena. In the case of San Quirico, it passed from the Emperor Frederick into Siena's keeping, and was not lost by her until she lost all. Charles V., descending on Siena, took this place on his way, and quartered his cavalry here. After that its story is as you know it. The Medici made it a marquessate for Cardinal Chigi, whose square house and weedy park are there to this day, and a vane on the church tower, pierced with the hills and cross. I should add that the collegiate church is magnificent—sane, strong, idiomatic, racy building, with two fine doors—one of angels, and the other of knotty columns standing on lions' backs. It has a jewel of a picture by Matteo of Siena, a golden-vested Madonna in a black cloak, and four attendant saints all intent upon the mystery they are serving.

house by rebuilding his native place. Corsignano was the village where he saw the light; there he built a street of palaces, a cathedral church, a piazza, a municipio; consecrated a bishop, imported with enormous pomp certain bones of Saint Andrew the apostle, and called the whole Pienza. Vain hope! For

The city of vanity.



MONTEPULCIANO.

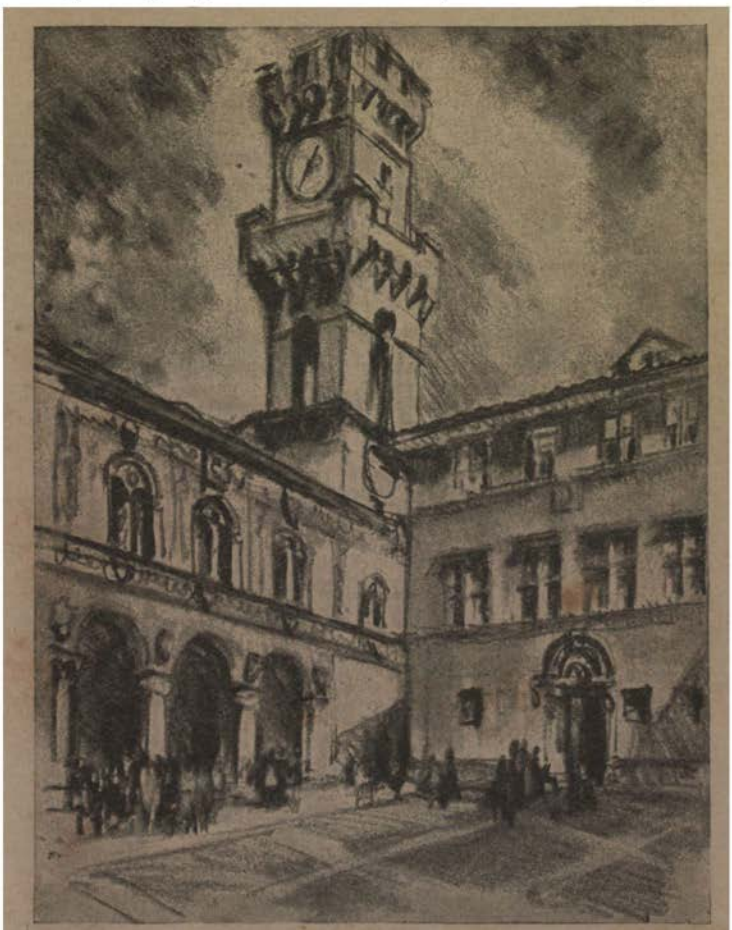
what purpose all this waste? As well could you make your brat a man by giving him a razor. You can no more make a city by building palaces than establish a church with apostles' bones. Pienza remains a country village; you can walk through it in ten minutes. But it has a street of great Florentine houses—spacious, ornate, stepped, broad-based and amply-corniced, in Rossellino's best manner. It has all the apparatus of a

city: a bishop's palace, a canonica, a pretorio, a communal tower, a piazza; and its people live in the little straight tenements their great-grandfathers were born in, and eat bread and garlic on the cathedral steps.

Whether it be that the vanity of the attempt is too open, or that the style of building is not sympathetic, it is certain that the effect of Pienza is not one to deceive the beholder. Great town houses need a great town; great churches need great assemblies; cities must not lack for citizens. I heard high mass at Pienza very stately done, with reverence, care, and even circumstance. I am sure that at the elevation the apostle's old bones may have stirred; but the congregation made no sign. Three old hedgers, their bills and sickles on the marble beside them, knelt mumbling under the dome; three girls with handkerchiefed heads were whispering in the nave. But there were canons in the choir; organ music pealed from the loft, and a bishop performed the rite. Thus honour was done to Pio Secondo and Saint Andrew's bones. It is a handsome church of the classical, spacious, insipid, late quattrocento style; too correct to be individual; in shape a Latin cross, with clustered shafts of grey stone to form nave and aisles, it has grey walls with narrow bands of black marble let in, and a vaulted roof of blue speckled with stars. You will see three fine pictures in it, all Sienese—one of Benvenuto di Giovanni's, one of Matteo's, weak for him, and a graceful Virgin in a dark cloak by Sano di Pietro.

All the same, the church like the town lacks character, as the contrivers of both mostly did. Whatever the Renaissance may or may not have

been, a birth and a begetting, or a sleep and a forgetting, by Rossellino's day it was an age of



PALAZZO PUBLICO, PIENZA.

rules. Passion went into those, personality was crushed that they might be kept. *Surtout point de formules* is an injunction which must always

be repeated, so prone are we to dig ruts for our wheels. A roomy place, this church served the French cavalry as stabling for their horses in 1555. Three times between the death of Pius and that of Siena the little town was sacked. At last the Medici balls disputed pride of place with the crescents of Piccolomini, the palaces emptied, the canons sang offices to themselves, their old bones, the wind, and the bats; and Pienza became what it now is, a city without citizens. It has a graceful pointed belfry, as you will not fail to notice when you leave it—a white stone affair, very like a Gothic spire seen across broad English meadows, half hidden in a clump of English elms. I do remember one near Malvern which might be its fellow.

AT THE VILLA BACCHLIN.

CHAPTER XXVI

MONTEPULCIANO

To reach this town, continuing the travel of the last chapter, you have still to go some three leagues of difficult country by a road inextricably involved in woods of young oak. It is well worth the pains. You rise by one wide circle after another to your reward: once out of the woods the views are superb, both behind and before. Pienza is behind; I saw it all purple, darkling through an inky cloud, with a vivid white steeple striking up out of the heart of a storm. Behind that again, above the turmoil which afflicted it, was San Quirico, set very high; and ridged over San Quirico itself, Montalcino, like a city in the skies. In front, where the air showed coldly pure, I saw, on a sudden hill, Montepulciano, heaped into a pyramid, pearl-grey and red, with two towers predominant, and a warm side open to the sun—a curtain of brick which, joining the cliff, seemed to run sheer down into liquid blue—the depths of the Val di Chiana. At least so it appeared to me. Mr. Pennell's picture gives a poet's vision of this eyrie, which, if it is not so

Broad views.

rock-bound as Orvieto, is longer to reach. Behind the mount on which it stands you have the vast violet spaces of the plain, with a sun-steeped foreground such as Claude alone had scope for. In it are three lakes—Montepulciano and Chiusi, little silver sheets; and beyond them, like a strip of green gauze under the purple hills, which hide Perugia and keep Cortona in shadow, Trasimeno, fatal name. All its secrets lapt in reeds, there is Trasimeno asleep in the light, with a high rock jutting into it, and on that rock a castle, Castiglione del Lago, which the reader will discover is not so romantic as it looks.

Montepulciano, though it never looks romantic, never loses its barbaric nakedness, get you as near as you will. Its only inn is called the Marzocco, in memory of Florentine occupation; and as if it were not enough to climb six miles of hill to reach the town, you must add at least two flights of stairs to reach the inn. I believe the lower floors were concerned with corn-chandlery, and afforded reasonable entertainment for rats. What is perhaps worse is that when you do get there, you are regarded by the undertakers with indifference if not with aversion. No smiling maids came out to coquette with cloaks and hand-baggage, no *facchino* strained at trunks, no deferential *padrone* nor far-seeing *padrona* knew my necessities before I asked. I remember loitering in an ante-room with last month's *Tribuna Illustrata* until, with a sudden access of rage, I got up and pulled the bell-rope out of its socket. And then a fluttered virgin appeared and said that she would see the

Humours of an inn.

cameriere. It was some time before I could accustom myself to such chilly treatment, but I got to understand it. It was that the *cameriere* was very well as he was, assiduously, nay, affectionately served by all the maids in the house. The casual guest was thus in the position of members of a learned club, who are discouraged

MONTEPULCIANO.

from exercising hospitality because it keeps the waiters up late.

He is, or was, this pasha of a waiter, a tall, florid man, inclined to *embonpoint*. He had cold blue eyes and a fair moustache, of which he was exceedingly tender. His manners were fine, but wanting cordiality, his movements sedate. He was an indifferent bad waiter, but I should fancy a good housewife.

The cameriere.

Whatever a matron's hand could find to do he did with all his might. I remember that he showed me my bedroom, and how he looked to see if there was lavender in the drawers. Coming downstairs, I saw him at the linen-cupboard giving out sheets and pillow-cases. He never wore anything but carpet slippers, and was fond of his dressing-gown in the mornings. In these —I mean in the slippers—he waited upon me at dinner, for it is true that he condescended so far; but I observed that the maids waited upon *him* hand and foot, and that is more than he ever did to me. In the process of the meal, indeed, I discovered his foible, which was for the impeccability of his *harem*. I say that they waited upon him hand and foot; the despot himself did not think so. He was horribly sensitive to the least fleck upon his self-esteem: if there were not two wenches holding plates or a sauce-boat at the door, and another in the room attendant upon the wag of his head, he couldn't bear it. As in the farmyard you may see great Chanticleer, surrounded by his zenana, if any one of the bevy chance to stray, how he chuckles and fills his burnished neck; and when she returns to the fold, how swoops he down, curvetting about her with trailing wing. So alert was my soft-shod monarch of the *Marzocco*, so tender of his prerogative. If Bettina played truant, it booted not that Nanetta and Maria were beside him, nor could they appease him by beseeching looks. He would ring for Bettina; he would go to the buttery door and bawl for her. He ceased not to bawl until one of the others, terrified, ran to fetch her up. How he scolded her; how he

scowled, tossed up his hands! It took long to pacify him, longer for me to dine. But it was rare to see him presently, in the midst of his now docile brood, grouting for them, so to speak, among the crockery, and when they were all busy picking about him, raising his great blonde head and looking sideways with an angry eye for any hint

MONTEPULCIANO.

of disrespect from anywhere. He "did himself," as they say, "uncommonly well"; and between breakfast and dinner smoked his *Virginia* in the dining-room, and read the news.

It had rained during my arrival, but cleared whilst I was settling in When I walked abroad it was into the gathering dusk, with a keen lemon light in the western sky, and a flurry of vaporous cloud drawing off it. The

First thoughts.

cobble-stones were gleaming still with wet as I mounted a steep street—the town properly consists of but two—towards the citadel. There are fine palace fronts in Montepulciano, all upon the slope; and what is finest about them is the way their broad steps are set into ground which is some four feet higher on one side than it is on the other. Better masonry, more nicely worked off, I have never seen. But if I was between the houses so (by Hercules) was the wind—bitter-cold, gusty, and strong. The whole place seemed in a scurry to get done with its immediate concern. One saw in terraced openings (giving on to the cliff) bending women with their skirts flying out, battling at their business. Men went muffled to the ears in fox-skin; boys blew on their fingers and trotted after us. Every one was active, on the jog; the *caffè* doors were not generously open, the wine-shops shut-to theirs with a snap as the topers pushed in or came huddling out. Your glimpses of the far-off country were of purple-black hills; gloom lay in the valley, here and there showed a house, pale as a ghost. A dust of snow came scudding over the way. You saw the far-stretching vista of the hill-street peppered in whirling white. And this was May! And this was Italy! Stern, stern is the spring in Montepulciano; but I gather from what I have seen since that the summer is yet more fierce.

And yet, out of the chance vantages of their crags, they grow, or did grow, a fine red wine, which Redi calls the king of all the Tuscan vats. They are said to have been famous for it from the 9th century, and Mr. Addington Symonds

liked it: my bottle, perhaps, was of a poor year. Assuredly, if Bacchus in Tuscany requires to blink unhindered at the sun, this is the place for him; for of late I have seen the whole bare rock quivering under canicular heat—cliffs, houses, roofs, and steeples all pale and hot as metal. You know all extremes of weather when you are so close to the sky.

History.

The R. P. Leandro Alberti, a learned Dominican, reports that when he was at Montepulciano, in the church of his order, in 1588, he was shown the body of a co-religionist, the Blessed Agnes da Gracchiano, which, whenever trouble or danger menaced the city, did vehemently sweat. *Certamente*, as he adds, *cosa grande e rara;* certainly a great and rare performance. Upon which portent my only comment must be that the skin of the sacred relic must have been in constant action, for the disastrous tale of Montepulciano is singular among Tuscan cities. Boasting itself founded by that *lars*, Porsenna of Chiusi, whom Macaulay has embalmed for his schoolboys, it was early a bone of contention between Florence and Siena: Siena's for forty years before 1154, then Florence's until 1202. Then, as fortune veered, the poor place was pitched from one to another. Montaperto gave it to Siena, Benevento returned it to Florence. The sympathies of the commune, be it said, were always Florentine, and the public buildings have an air of that city; but such things counted for little in the game of politics. In 1294 the two rivals seem to have agreed to share our town: they had a Bandinelli of Siena for Podestà, a Florentine, Gian-

figliazzi, for captain. Meantime a home family, Del Pecora, began to rise towards a tyranny. Matteo Villani has much to say of them. There was Corrado del Pecora at the root, then a Guglielmo, then a Ranieri, who came to be Bishop of Chiusi, a position of advantage for tyrants. The example of the Duke of Athens, that fine figure of a man, inspired them to commence despots. Bertoldo Novello—young Bertoldo, son of old Bertoldo del Pecora—shot a shrewd bolt to that end when he married a Fiesca Malaspina and begat James and Nicholas. These two scoundrels, rivals in the beginning, intrigued with neighbour states, one with Perugia, the other with Siena, with the result that first Perugia made a slave of the place, and next Siena. They betrayed their fellow-countrymen, they betrayed and re-betrayed each other. Once James got in with a band by night, and terrorised for two days by means of Greek fire and barricades; then Nicholas called up the Sienese, his friends, and thought to have James in a trap. James escaped by setting Montepulciano on fire, beginning with his own palace. There came, however, a day when, by Florentine help, both brothers were out of the commune; but that proved the worst of all. They accorded their differences, joined hands and forces, marched against the city, entered it with ease, and held a joint rule for five or six years, which, with some interruption, was continued by their sons, John, son of Nicholas, and Gerard, son of James. To continue were wearisome, since the pair of sons followed the tactics of the pair of fathers. The end of all things was this, that one again was

forced to ally himself with Siena, the other with Florence. This time, owing to the occupation of Siena by Visconti of Milan, Florence prevailed. In 1390 the Montepulcianesi sent in their unequivocal submission to the great commune, and most of their troubles were ended. What remains of singular is that the Grand Duke

MONTEPULCIANO.

Ferdinand conferred the town upon his wife Cristina of Lorraine absolutely, and that she coined money there in her own name as lady of the land.

When I say that it is a town of few graces, I may be taken to mean that I do not think it worth a visit; and truthfully I do not, except for the highly curious in dilettantism, or the highly interested in Politian.

The sights.

The Piazza, or Rock of the citadel, has the severe look of a barrack square—not a tree, not a painted loggia, little grass. Fronting upon it are the ragged brick of the cathedral, the maimed stump of its belfry. The Palazzo Pubblico has a machicolated screen of heavy stonework and a short tower, in shape like that of the Signiory at Florence, and said by the learned to have been the model for it. One fine palace there is here, the Pucci, I believe, with two loggias, and a beautiful brick moulding for a cornice. As for interiors, that of the church would be handsome if it were not so inordinately wide, and if the pilasters were not so heavy as to dwarf themselves. There is a splendid picture by Taddeo di Bartolo of Siena, there are two ugly statues by Michelozzo, designed for the tomb of one Aragazzi, a poetaster, and by the door are two bas-reliefs of the same man's, admired by Mr. Addington Symonds, but not by me. Personally, I have no liking for that Florentine adroitness which could copy anything so well that the very excellence of the imitation defeated itself. For if you copy and add nothing, of a surety you take away whatever worth your copy might have had. Consider these bas-reliefs, which, because they stare from their harsh surroundings in this mountain-hold, are better illustrations of the thin confectionery of Florence than most things in that city itself. The crowded nudes upon them are in the manner of an archaic Greek *stele*; but exactly in the manner. The figures are squat, and wriggle in lines like leeches in a bottle. Why? Because the Greek made them so. Aragazzi and his wife are in toga and chiton,

their swarming children are mother-naked. Why? Because the Greek chose it. Now when I reflect upon dead Ilaria at Lucca, or the dead Cardinal of Portugal at San Miniato; when I remember that lovely nymph with the distaff who presides over the tomb of the Conte Ugo in the Badia, I feel that it was better, in art, to be

EVENING—THE ARNO, FLORENCE.

flimsy than arid. The Florentine suburbans, Mino and Desiderio, may have been frivolous, but they were never pedants. Children never are. They may have been affected, what we call "precious," but they were as limpid as running water. But Michelozzo's wriggling nudes are repulsive—to me, at least. Another exercise in the frigid, which has its admirers, is San Gallo's church of San Biagio in the plain immediately

below the town. A yellowstone, cruciform church, capped by a tall cupola—whose form is formalism, whose rigidity is mistook for dignity, I have never seen a worse church than this, though there are others as bad: one at Prato, and two at Cortona. To worship there—I tried! I and a few bored peasants knelt there for an hour of a Sunday morning: it was like kneeling in a sepulchre—a sepulchre of windy shams, reducing Catholicism to doll's house work.

As to Politian, who left this town as young Agnolo Cini, and now has monuments enough in it—a street, a theatre, and three or four *caffès* to his name—as to Politian, this is hardly the place to speak of him. He was, of all the versifiers of the Quattrocento, the most dextrous and the best able to "pretend," as children say; he had learning, too—but he had little else. He had nothing approaching to the incisiveness of Bojardo, none of the native fluency of the Pulci, none of the silken quality of Ariosto, who was so nearly a poet that real poets like Byron and real critics like Landor and Stendhal have thought him one. Politian, I judge, was at heart a fair-weather young man, whose career was to get on. Pliant as a withy-wand he could have turned to any use. He found scholarship the fashion in Florence: he bought a Greek grammar. In a short spell he knew all the Greek there was to be known, and a sweet-toned old dreamer—a true student—like Ficino had the noble humility to call him master. Politian master of Ficino! But this was not enough for him. He found Luca Pulci confecting a sugar-epic—*Jousting of Lorenzo*—and getting glory

Politian.

from it: straightway he confects his own sugar-epic—*Jousting of Giuliano*—does it better; and the greater glory is his. He finds L. B. Alberti making comedies "in the Greek manner," and Lorenzo turning his idle fancies to *Sacre Rappresentazione*, and is too wise to copy such men as they. But he absorbs their forms into his *Orfeo*, which Mr. Symonds could not really have thought a masterpiece. It is, at any rate, a compendium of every mode known to pedantry—your historical-pastoral-epical-tragical-threnodical bacchanal, cut up into the infantine passages of a Mystery Play. It reads gaspily as they do, but is none the better for that. It is the shell of a play, as San Biagio is the husk of a temple. Such things—and there are many such things in Montepulciano—make the judicious grieve.

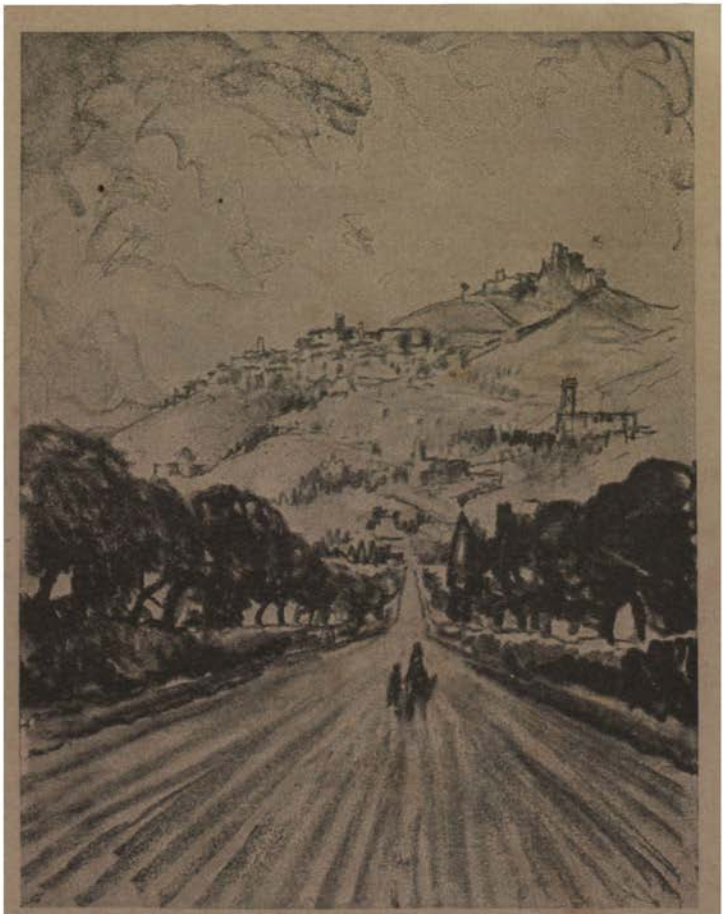
CHAPTER XXVII

VAL DI CHIANA: SIENA TO CORTONA—TRASIMENO

THE short road to Cortona takes the traveller over grey mud-heaps to Asciano, thence through a fine upland country to Sinalunga; and there he will find himself in prospect of the great plain which they call Val di Chiana, withal river Chiana there is now none. Of the two nations, Asciano and Sinalunga, I have little to report save that both are handsome, prosperous, and well-seated amid trees and airy downs. Asciano has something of the habit of a Berkshire town with its good red houses faced with white, and its strong churches. But its emblazoned gateway, its red-brick bell-tower, and tall stone tower of the commune, correct the first impression. Monasteries upon the hill-tops all about, bullock-carts in the bare streets, a brisk and civil race of men, straw-hatted Madonnas marketing at dawn: no such things are in Saxon Berks, though the maids of Hungerford be fair to see, and Newbury wives make straight children. From the piazzale at Sinalunga—again a very ornate market-town, with a red Renaissance

Asciano, Sinalunga.

church cupola'd and belfried as befits—you have, as I say, the whole range of the plain from



CORTONA.

Fojano to Montepulciano, beyond it the great lake, beyond that again the Perugian heights which lured Flaminius to his destruction. A

noble prospect into which you descend rapidly by way of Torrita and Bracciano.

Val di Chiana.

Once a poisonous swamp, where (as old Fazio says) were—

> volti pallidi e confusi,
> Perché l' aere e la Chiana è lor nemica,
> Sicchè gli fa idropici e rinfusi [1]—

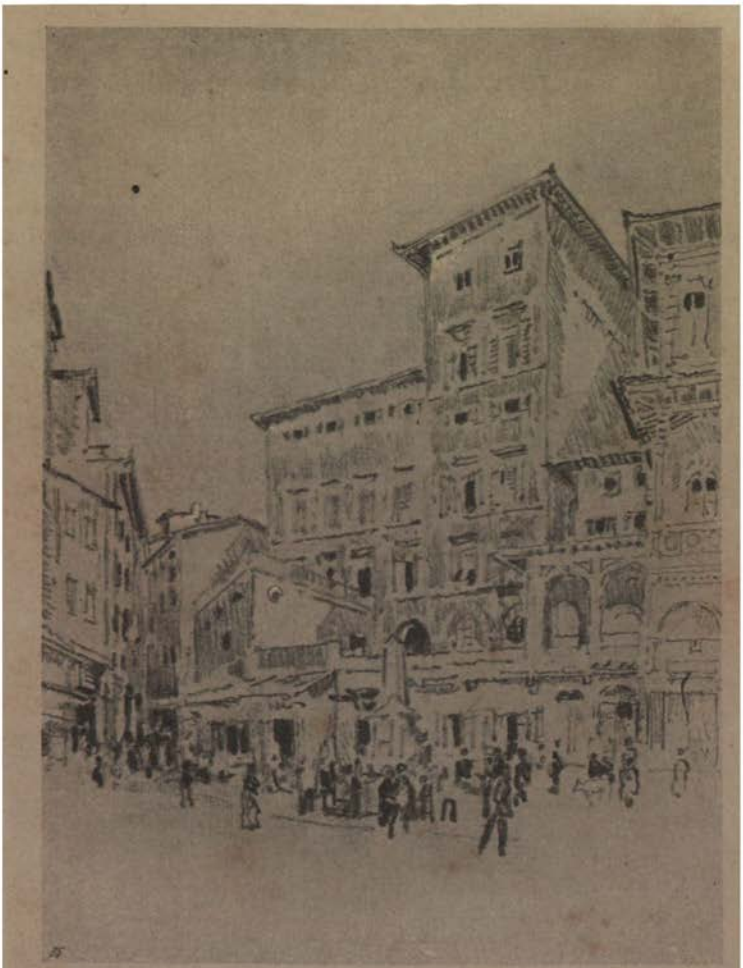
the plain is now a blossoming garden. Better husbandry have I seen nowhere but in the *contado di Lucca*. Compared to that green paradise it is treeless, and in hot weather can be insufferable; but it is pleasant to see the tall corn, which is life to men, growing out of the wicked earth which was men's death. Whatever the Chiana (*Clanis* of the Romans) may have been—and an expression, *le Chiane*, in Fazio leads one to suppose that in his day it had a divided course—it is now reduced into orderly canals, admirable for irrigation and drainage, but in nowise picturesque. Neither the austere desolation of the Maremma, nor the green profusion of our Fens, nor the golden breadths of La Beauce in France, belong to the Val di Chiana. The cultivation is universal and minute. The fields seem never to run more than two acres, so one's progress is as if one were to drive through twenty miles of allotment gardens—comfortable, but not exhilarating.

There are trees along the western side of the

[1] The Val di Chiana was always proverbial for pestilence. Dante likens the groan of Malebolge to those you would hear—

> se degli spedali
> Di Valdichiana tra il luglio e il settembre
> E di Maremma e di Sardigna i mali
> Fossero in una fossa tutti insembre.

lake, and beyond them near a quarter-mile of reeds before you get to the water. Its silver stretches



CORTONA.

seem uninhabited by birds, and are too shallow for boats of any draught. Pleasant as it is to

be near water, this is not the sort of water one would choose. Not this way came Flaminius escaping Hannibal, though there must always have been a road by Orvieto to Rome. He tried to squeeze in between Passignano and the heights on the opposite shore, and paid for it, as all the world knows. In mediæval days the Baglioni of Perugia were lords of the lake. Here, at Castiglione del Lago, a high rock, and the only one, jutting into the water they had a great double-towered castle—one tower of stone, three-angled, machicolated in red brick, and one four-square standing in the water. By its aid they held the Orvieto road, as by Magione on the other side that of Perugia. The little town, but for its castle which is apart from it, looks blighted and poverty-struck; and so it is. I found its only inn—Trattoria del Trasimeno—to be quite remarkably bad; but its landlord as unmistakably good. His engaging candour would commend itself to any humane traveller. He was a fresh-coloured, white-haired little gentleman, well-set up, and dressed in a suit of Scotch plaid. He had the decisive air of a retired colonel turned squire, but kept all the simplicity of his nation. After the preliminaries of hand-washing were done he took me by the button apart; and "*Senta, Signore*," he began, "this is a poor little country, where we think ourselves lucky to be alive at all. There is no meat, there are no fish but eels, and eels at this season of the year are not good for the stomach. But there does happen to be in the house a fine young dead chicken. He, I need not say, is much at your service." I engaged the chicken,

Trasimeno, Castiglione.

adding that I assumed his death to have been violent. The landlord rubbed his chin, looking at me out of very blue eyes. "As violent as you please," he replied. "These hands have newly strangled him." Evidently the murder had been done partly for my sake, and he not sure how I should take it. It proved an atrocious bird,

CORTONA—PALLONE.

for which I had to wait three-quarters of an hour in a cave of flies and bad smells. Everything was bad that day—the wine flat and sour, the minestra full of garlic, the bread musty, the maid frowzy and ill-tempered; but to the little landlord everything seemed colour of rose since he had done a stroke of business. He had killed an uneatable fowl, and I was to pay for it.

I take it that the lake is in Umbria, that

country of soft fells, great saints, and little women. It is geographical fact that the road from it to Cortona—a nine mile affair—is so. But Cortona itself is undeniably Tuscan, mountain-built, harsh, and uncomfortable as nearly all hill-towns in Tuscany are. The city stands high, scattered up the slope of a mountain, but not crowning the top. There may have been a great citadel there once, where the fortezza now is with the church of Santa Margherita, but nothing of the sort can be seen now. Coming at it from Trasimeno, you fail to get it in silhouette: the effect is of a litter of grey buildings. On the northern road—that which takes you to Arezzo—the sight is finer.

Into Cortona.

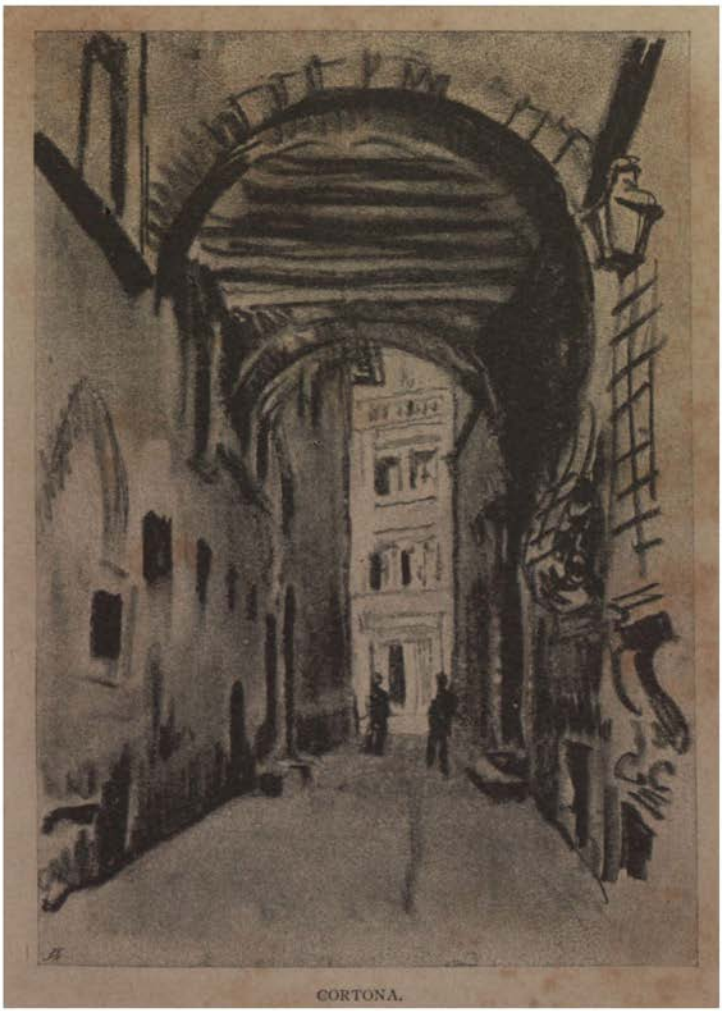
Nine miles though it be, with eight of them dead straight, your road turns as many times in the last of them to reach the gate. It is better going than the way to Volterra, for this reason: there are more gradients, and they are easier. At the second turn you pass one of those cruciform, domed churches—*aut Sangalli aut diaboli*—of which Montepulciano boasts; after that you top it by a thousand feet or more and drive up the narrow street to a bad inn.[1]

Drab and dingy, stinking city,[2] it has an origin so backward and august that no man can reckon it or tell how splendid it was. I find that I must

[1] *Nazionale* is its name, and I don't think there is another. It is dirty and ill-found. The host and his wife are obsequious but helpless; the entrance swarms with beggars and touts. The one capable person is the chambermaid, a young and pretty woman, with the most exuberant person I ever saw in this world.

[2] This, by the way, was not how Dennis found Cortona. Writing in 1860 or so, he says: "She is no longer to be accused of filthy, ill-paved streets, nor of mean and squalid houses." Now, however, I do accuse her. I never was in a viler-smelling town.

quote Dennis: "Traveller," says he, "thou art



CORTONA.

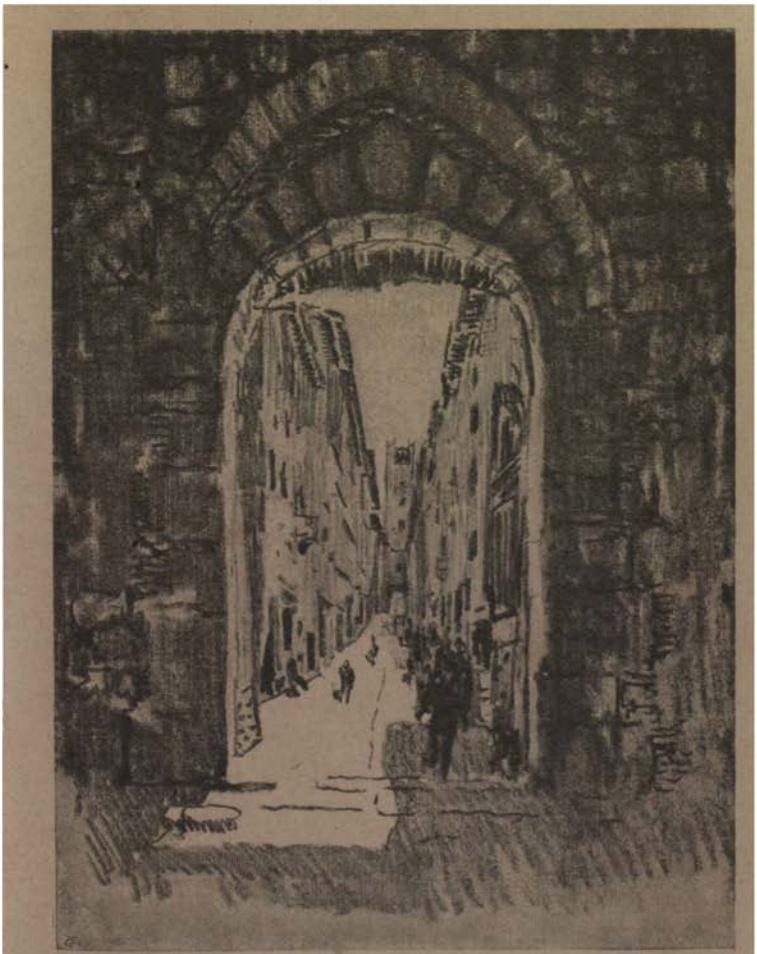
approaching Cortona! Dost thou reverence age —that fulness of years which, as Pliny says, 'in

man is venerable, in cities sacred'? Here is that which demands thy reverence. Here is a city, compared to which Rome is but of yesterday —to which most other cities of ancient renown are fresh and green. Thou mayest have wandered far and wide through Italy—nothing hast thou seen more venerable than Cortona. Ere the days of Hector and Achilles, ere Troy itself arose —Cortona was." He cites the legend that God-descended Dardanus was its king—a claim almost as great as Fæsulæ's; and then he says, "Yon solemn city was once the proudest and mightiest in the land, the metropolis of Etruria, and now—but enter its gates and look around."

This I did, and found Cortona, as I have said, drab, dingy, and stinking. It was so bad in this last particular that I saw the sewer-traps were blocked up with wedges of wood; and yet the fall must be like that of a cataract, for the streets are so steep that at various turns of the way you could step off the pavement on to the roofs of the street below. Its churches are—with two exceptions—derelict and ruinous, its pictures (magnificent though they have been) are cracking, dropping, and clouding with cobwebs. I had a six-fingered guide who was a liar and object of suspicion to every man he met. I had respected the name of Cortona and all its dim vistas; I am prepared to respect those still—but I saw little of them.

To describe what I did see—the Municipio is a fine bastille, well placed in the piazza of its name. I saw the rings of Albizzi, the griffins of Baglioni, the stags of Salviati among its shields; no doubt Casali was there also—that proud family

which, when Cortona was free of Arezzo, lorded it there for five generations and ended in a



A GATEWAY, CORTONA.

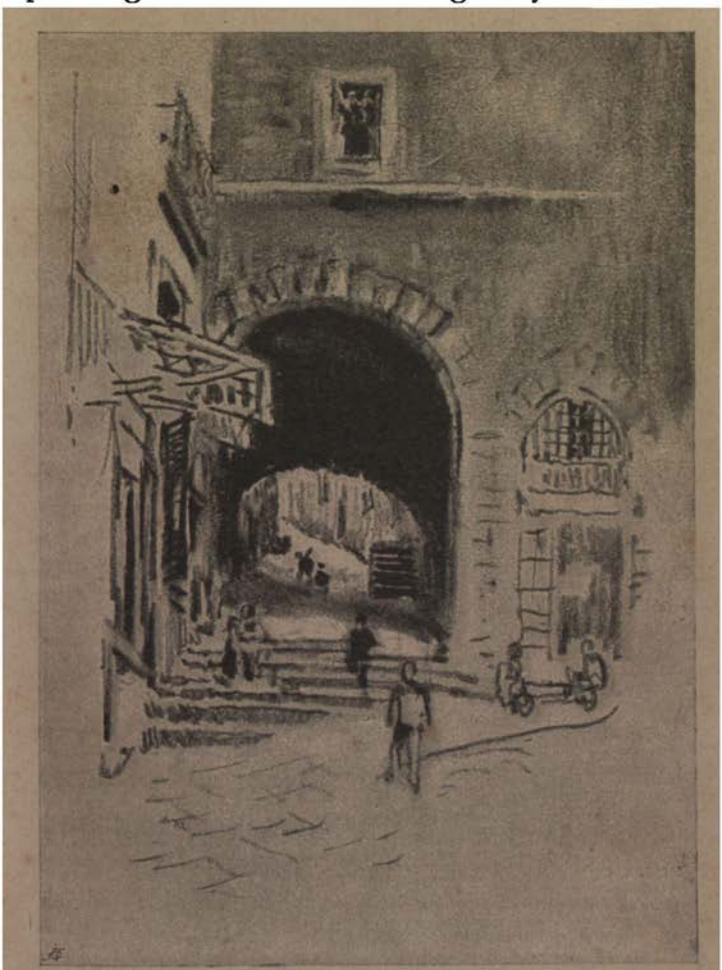
nephew who murdered his uncle to get the dominion, and was himself strangled by Ladislas

of Naples, and his lordship turned into a servitude and sold to Florence. The gates and curtain walls, which run up to the fortezza on the top of the hill, and are in places forty feet high, are magnificent building: two of the gates, at least, are Etruscan. And then there are the Cathedral, and the Luca Signorellis.

The Duomo.

Tucked away as the church is behind an arcade and a palace of the bishop, it is next to impossible to get a view of it outside; taken in hand as it was in the eighteenth century, when whitewash was the only wear, and painted over in grey and white regardless of tenth-century marble, the view you have of the inside is unhappily too pronounced. In proportions it is a good church, and in parts excellent. The square choir behind the high altar contains the Signorellis; but these apart, there are some things to look at—*e.g.* a Roman sarcophagus of Centaurs and Lapiths, which they fondly represent for the tomb of Flaminius, but which, since it contains a portrait of the deceased, and that a woman, gives them the lie as soon as they utter it. The high altar is adorned with candle-bearing angels in the manner of Mino of Fiesole, and near by is an aumbry for the holy oil which is incontestably his, and a dainty, delicate piece of low-relief it is. I must not forget a side chapel on the right which enshrines an old *pietà* of stone, rude and stunted old dolls enacting the dirge. Before this piece—which is as if peasant-mummers should play a holy mystery and be frozen in the act—I saw the Canons of Cortona kneel and sing a litany, old fat-encased sinners and young, lean ones with very bright

eyes and much assurance, demure choir-boys pinching each other and looking away—all kneel-



STREET, CORTONA.

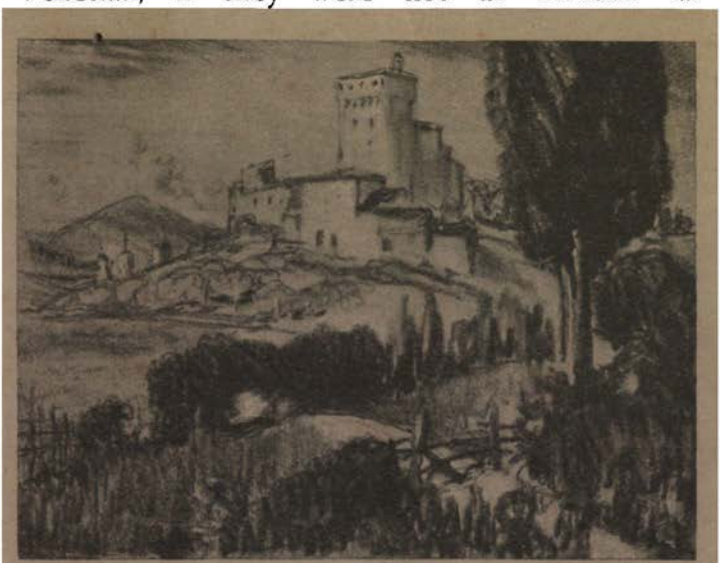
ing and singing together before the staring effigies. Not until this daily rite was performed dared

I approach the choir and see the Signorelli pictures.

Luca the Great.

Mr. Symonds tells a fine story of this man, how he had an only son, a beautiful boy of perhaps fourteen years. This child took a fever and died in a day and a night, in his father's absence. They come and tell Luca. He hears the news in grim silence, but packs up his gear and away. Arrived at house he goes into the chamber, turns out the nuns watching his dead, and locks the door upon him and it together. There he remains for some two days—long enough to alarm his friends. They knock, they pry through the keyhole: no answer, nothing to be seen. They break a way in: they find the dead boy stripped naked, his father with an easel before him, painting his beauties. Strange, preoccupied, hard man—with a touch of the faun, nay, of the satyr, about him: hard in his outlook and hard in his handling, he was. He has a fondness for rendering flesh like burnished metal—bronze or brass as the case may be, and can never resist your beady-eyed young ruffian, full of blood and sin, your superb, over-fed young animal who will drink blood if he can spare time from shedding it. His virgins are *Bona Deas*, his Christ a Prometheus; his old men are nigromancers of Chaldæa, his honourable women might suckle Pan. In whatsoever mood you find him there will be some hint of the woodland wild in some corner of his painted cloth. Adam and Eve—little moulded bas-reliefs, as they seem—stare up at the great Tree (on which the Virgin rises crowned) as they might really have stared at the stock of it, the Tree in the

Garden, fierce, darting creatures, barely masters of the beasts they led. And that picture is in his tame, early manner when he was copying Perugino. In the *Deposition*, where he had come to his own, there are stooping figures of women and young men which you might think Venetian, if they were not as metallic as



FARM NEAR MONTEPULCIANO.

Mantegna; but with a pagan tang which Luca alone possessed (and Michael Angelo took from him).

Even in that first manner of his he showed the stuff he was of—which was not Perugino's. He had a depth of colour not known to the Umbrians —as in the *Assumption*, where the solemn greens, roses,[1] and purples are wholly beyond the Perugian.

[1] Peony colour: deeper and hotter and more metallic than the hue of roses.

So also is the figure on the right of this picture —a Sibyl in a gold cope, with the savage, fine face of a young Baglione. On the other hand, the bending Creator, the stamping angels and dropt flowers are all of the childish Umbrian habit. On the same wall as this *Assumption* is an *Ascension of the Madonna.* Here she rises

CASTIGLIONE DEL LAGO.

above the open tomb, angels all about her with viols, harping her to the skies. A great decorative picture, sadly faded. The *Communion of the Apostles* and *Noli me tangere* are both Venetian in scope and tone: not so the *Deposition*, which is very original indeed: deep in colour, heightened with gold—reds, crimsons, and browns on a field of dark green.

At San Niccolò, a little church in a garden,

which you reach by a tremendous paved hill, there are some more Signorellis—one remarkable. This is the *Madonna della Seggiola*, so called: a pensive Virgin holding a fine Child on her lap, Sampietro and Sampaolo standing by. The whole thing is in tones of three colours—green, red, and brown. There is no other colour at all. The very sky is green, fainting off to white. The altar-piece here is hard, with brazen flesh-tones, in his Orvieto and least pleasing manner. There is nothing so good as the *Pan* at Berlin: but Signorelli was one of the few Italian artists who cannot be put into a category—and left there. It is astonishing how few there are. Giotto, Donatello, Piero della Francesca, Lionardo, for Florence; Signorelli for Umbria; Mantegna for Lombardy; Paolo Veronese for Venice—some great portraitists, whom I leave apart—are there any others to dare a position in the Arts comparable with Dante's in letters? No, indeed.

I have no more to say of Cortona, save that I was glad to be out of it.

CHAPTER XXVIII

AREZZO: QUICK AND DEAD

I DROVE to Arezzo from the south, by the Valdi-Chiana road, through low green hills and fat furrows—a Leicestershire landscape, which, without specific attraction, was comfortable enough to fill me with content. The day was fine, the wind was mild, there was a noble sunset. I reached Arezzo, the prosperous place, before dusk, dined and looked about me. A many things I saw: the streets were full of strolling, evening citizens; great churches, great houses loomed solemnly out of the dark. But (as often happens) the best sight of all was to be had from my own inn window. . . .

An Aretine.

She is very pale in the face, and her hands are dangerously white. If her eyelids are heavy in the morning it is no wonder, for she is late to bed and must be up at cock-crow. But she is able to laugh at her own leaden plight, and so to win your smiling acquiescence in that and all her other concerns. No scowling, no yearning Godward from her prison bars: crook your little finger, she will laugh at it; nod your head, she will mimic you; salute her, she will sweep you a curtsey. She is responsive to open-

heartedness as a hedge bird to the sun ; sings, in fact, at a kind look, like Dante's blackbird.

AREZZO

Full of this innocent kind of gaiety, which bubbles as a spring under moss ; not without

proper coquetry, careful of her figure, tender to her hair, deft in the way she wears her clothes, I consider her the chiefest treasure of Arezzo, for reasons which I intend to declare, though I know nothing of her but her pleasant face. She sleeps and commerces with the world, eats her scraps of meals, and says her little dutiful prayers in a square box of a room facing my own across the way. So far as I know, she never leaves it from Sunday night to Sunday morning. She has no worshippers but me, though familiars not a few; no gilt hearts are offered to her, no hearts but mine. By profession she is a dressmaker, and not a Madonna; but if her name is not Mary, it should be Martha, the delicate, cheerful, thrifty, diligent soul.

She goes to bed at ten; at least, that is the time she turns out the gas, which has been drying her since dusk. At six of the evening she has eaten some pallid mess in a plate and drunk a little red wine; she has left off work to secure this refreshment and gone back the moment the plate was bare. Humming an air, she has got up and wiped her mouth—and this knowing well that for four solid, gas-thickened hours she must be stooping over a machine, pedalling like a convict at his crank, spying sideways for a crinkle in the hem, narrowing her chest, craning forward her young head. I have begun at the end; let me stretch back to the opening of her long day. She sets wide her shutters at six in the morning and busks herself. Who would know this better than I, who myself got up at five to be beforehand? Of toilette affairs I know nothing—I am no profaner of mysteries. It was six by the church

bells when she rubbed her eyes; at half past, when I looked again, she was praying by her bedside. She was by then in a black skirt and lavender blouse, her fair hair was becomingly adorned with tortoiseshell pins. A minute or so

THE MARKET-PLACE, AREZZO.

later she is to be seen sipping a glass of coffee (which has been making over the gas), and chattering nineteen to a dozen with her three mates. Sleepy, for she still rubs her eyes; tired to death, for she yawns and strains her arms, straightens her back, and stares with a sigh; with a vista before her (if this be Monday) of fifteen

hours' work for every day of the six—she and these other young women, if you will believe me, gossip and whisper and prick up their ears, preen themselves before the glass like pigeons in the sun, are all agog for the sights and sounds of the scarcely-peopled street. Now and again they are at the window; pale prisoners! the sun has no grudge, but greets them fairly. There is a nod for the baker's boy—another lax child of the heat. He returns the salute gaily, with a flourish. Coffee glasses are put away, the gas is turned out; they stoop their shoulders to the yoke; the hum of the sewing-machines will hardly cease to accompany their voices till night falls.

What a life for a pretty girl! But how dauntlessly borne; with what interest, what sparkling eyes, what a sweet humour! What is the aim of it all? Is coffee an end? *Minestrone* on a greasy plate? Are these things so desirable that to get the right relish you must work fifteen hours a day for three hundred days a year? And if, by the time you are thirty, signorina, you have therefore worked sixty-seven thousand five hundred hours—will the coffee still be reward enough, the relish of the *pasta* still be keen? Out upon it! *Ces dames*, you tell me, must live? I know that very well. But that they should live ungrudgingly, not cursing me in their hearts; that they should be able to laugh, hum tunes, nod to the baker's boy from their prison casement high above him; that they should dress themselves prettily and turn about before the glass; that it should be possible to suck juices out of such poor husks and shreds of days, bloom like flowers in unsunned corners of

Apostrophe.

the ground—all this fills me with wonder and thanksgiving. I tell you fairly, not in all dappled Italy have I seen a greater treasure than this. O spacious, cleanly, white-walled Arezzo; cattle-stocked city of marts and ploughing machines; birthplace of Vasari; demesne of the astonishing prelate, Bishop Guido Tarlati! With such daughters as these, if your sons were of a piece, I would add my suffrages to yours for any prosperous fate that you might choose. To be like Milan, for instance, is the aim of any Italian city, and few there be without the secret belief that so some day they shall be. I would hope this for you, Arezzo—your piazza should be a maze of circling tramcars, whirling for ever there like the drifting lost souls of Dante's first hell—if only I could think your young men worthy of it. But I do not think them worthy of it; how can I while my gas-fed nymphs of the sewing-machines peak close-girdled in their attic? Was not Petrarch an Aretine? Aretine and Man of Feeling, he did well to seek out Arquà and the green breadths of the Euganean hill; for he who melodiously wailed the Lady of Avignon must have served a seraglio here.

> Subito in allegrezza si converse
> La gielosia, che 'n su la prima vista
> Per si alto adversario al cor mi nacque

Petrarch admitted the rivalry of the sun for his services to the face of Laura; I make the best I can of the man whom I sometimes see in the society of my nymph. **A friend of the house.** He is a fat, devil-may-care, chair-tilting fellow, whose waistcoat and trousers are not on speaking

terms—evidently a friend of the house. He is vastly familiar, wanders in and out of the work-

THE CATHEDRAL, AREZZO.

room at will, tips his bad hat to the back of his head, sits on the table, smokes a cigar, ruminates

aloud upon men and cities, has a caustic wit, and is evidently not too guarded in his illustrations. I detect barrack-room reminiscences in some of his pleasantries; not that I hear them, but judge by his knowing air. Moreover, my nymph sometimes checks her laughing in midstream, then looks with feigned interest into the street. Certainly, however, she is pleased, therefore she pleases me. As the sun enhanced his Laura's beauty to Petrarch, so here I particularly admire my nymph for her conduct in this nice affair. She has no conscious hand upon herself or on him: she is neither timid nor provocative, neither arch nor frankly beckoning. In a word there is no smoulder of sex about her. Now, my countrywomen are all sex, and Frenchwomen too—but with a difference. The first make, and the second await what both desire—namely, advances; but my Aretine has no such thought. She is simply glad to see her friend, to play off her tongue against his, to laugh at his jokes, and to make him laugh at hers. If he admires her clothes, as well he may—she has a charming figure, a gimp and belted waist—what then? Do you suppose she is flattered? Not in the least. She is pleased, and that is her reward. She has no second thought. If she had, if by some chance spark—ah! I have seen a Tuscan girl under the love-stress; there's no doubt about the thing when it comes. But, awaiting that terrible access of labouring breath, glazed eyes and shuddering, that *rigor*, that tetanus, that blue-lipped struggle in deep water, I do affirm my lady of the workroom as untainted as a boy of twelve.

Do I wish to write of her with passion all

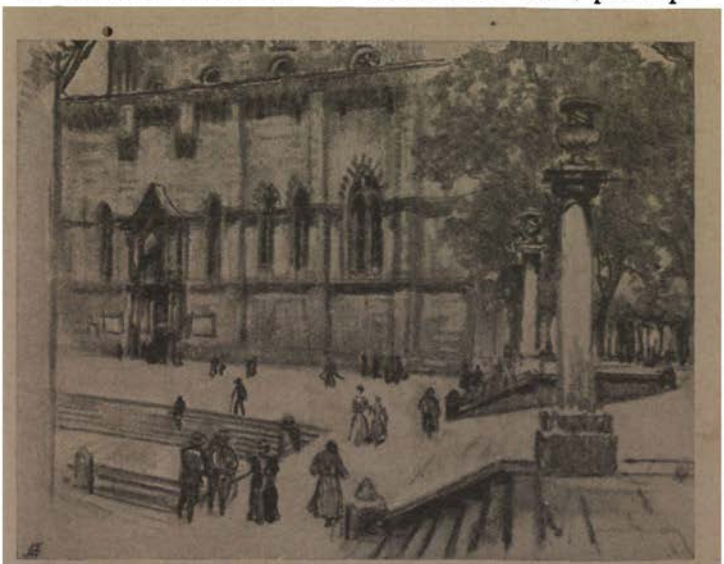
alight? Then let me see her in the presence of a client, for there are her simple delights as yet —in deftness and in courtesy. If courtesy be to set at ease by being at ease, she is then most courteous. If gentle birth do best show out in sympathy, why, then there is in all the Val d' Arno no better blood than hers. They are of humble station, these clients—maid-servants, farm girls, factory hands, and such like. They come in at what times they can spare, mostly with a friend—for the thing is of tremendous importance, you must understand —whose judgment is to turn the scale; and then the conference, the discussions, the vivid play of hands, the cocking of heads, now this side, now the other, the appeals to the testimony of the mirror, the pinning and tying, the business of knees, fingers, and eyes! For the milliner must kneel and the client lift her elbow and look down over shoulder—and yet it is hard to say which has the most interest of the three, which is most ardent in the chase. Occasionally a fourth, yet more rarely a fifth, is called in to some especially fine piece of fitting. The milliner may well despair, and I know that she does—for once, in the case of some vast-sided daughter of the plough, I saw her fairly cry; for all this, if you please to understand, she gets not one penny piece; this is fair charity of her heart which prompts her to give full measure of what she has in store. And, again, it is her pursuit of the ideal—the flaunting, flittering, impossible ideal of smoothing the breadths over ungainly haunches.

A client.

If I could settle in Arezzo, in a decent messuage, with cupboards for a few books, a

view of the tower of Sta. Maria delle Pieve, a small square of land where I could grow vines and stocks and a carnation or two for my wife's girdle; so soon as ever the tenement was handfasted to me, I should go to the shop in the Via Cavour and pay my addresses to the little milliner. It would take time, perhaps

Aspirations of the scholiast.



THE CATHEDRAL, AREZZO.

a year; but what hurry is there? The day would come at last when I should say, "Come, my dear, get roses in your cheeks. Turn out the gas; you have lived on that long enough. It is sufficient for me that, in spite of it, you have betrayed all the symptoms of a perfect wife. You make yourself pretty because, being so pretty at heart, you cannot help yourself. You are patient, cheerful, thrifty; you sing all day. In any man's

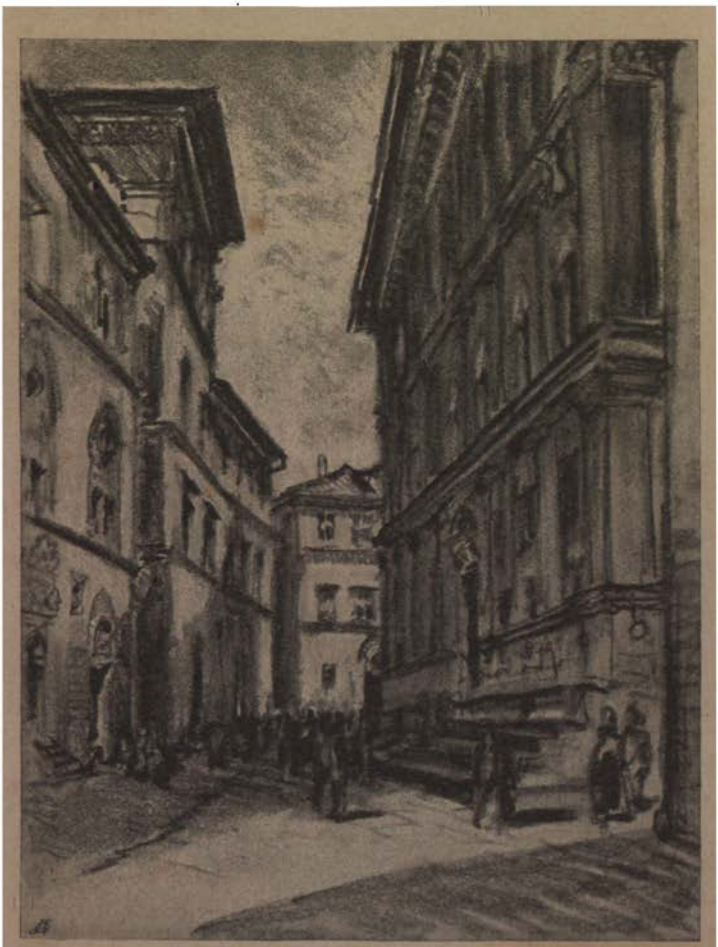
house you would be better than a linnet in a cage; in mine you may run a risk of being a goddess on a pedestal. If I had my way, Ferdinando Primo should be pulled down from his perch by the Duomo steps, and you should be set up—you, laughing as you bend to your daily burden—an emblem of what is most precious in Tuscany, above Michael Angelo, or Sustermans, or the Medici diadem, or the Appanages. Come, lady, come, do my hand the honour to take it. Just Heaven! what a holiday you shall have!"

This is my plain ambition at present: to live and die in Arezzo, a prosperous country town in a fold of the hills, and to be warden of its chief treasure, a pretty, fading drudge, who is happy because she has a pure heart.

Consider now another Aretine, who exacted a monument—and has got it—more perdurable in the records of his countrymen, and in addition to that, has his tomb of travertine and black marble in the cathedral. Well may Herr Baedeker call him "an ambitious and energetic prelate"; this was a man indeed—no other than Bishop Guido Tarlati of Pietramala, many times a lord. His family, which came from a castle above Arezzo, on the watershed of Tiber and Arno, had always been for robbery and the empire, and always great people in this chosen city of both; but while certain Ubertini held the see they were forced to bide their time. There might be two Popes of Rome, but Arezzo is a little place. The first thing, then, that I learn of our Guido is misfortune. In 1308 the Aretines turned him and his friends out of their towers and strong houses; the Guelfs came

Another Aretine.

in and made a peace with Florence. It was a day of party names, when Florence herself was dis-



AREZZO.

tracted by Black and White. The new Aretine power called itself the Green Party, and hoped

for the best—a council of perfection in Tuscany. In the very same year Corso Donati was killed at San Salvi, and Dante's trumpeted Saviour of Italy, his Moses Redux, chosen to be Emperor; a month or two elapses, the Tarlati with their Ghibellines fill all the mountain roads about Arezzo, storm the town, carry a gate at the sword's point—and there is an end of the Green Party. The Tarlati sat in the high seat, and all Italy heard of them before long. Guido Tarlati was chosen Bishop, as I make out, about 1320. His first act was to make friends with the notable Castruccio of Lucca, and his next to form a company of knights under his own banner. With these he made great play. It happened to be a time when Florence found her hands full of Pisa and Castruccio; time of times for the Bishop who, one after another, got all his towns back and brought the Aretine contado to very near its former pride.

Remarkable conduct of the Bishop.

You may observe his progress up to this point upon his tomb, where with strange irony the glory and shame of him are set side by side. Cynical cenotaph! He is made Bishop; he is hailed as lord; these are the first scenes and their superscriptions. You see the Pope's Legate laying hands upon him, then the kneeling ancients of this place, and himself, outside the walls as yet, deprecating the honour they do him. He is sitting afield here, robed as a prelate should be; but above him, where you would look for a cross or staff, is the horned head of a battering-ram. Sinister emblem! In the next tablet behold him within the walls on a tall throne, elbows out,

hands on knees, about him imploring figures. One clasps his feet, one his knees, others strain

THE PRISON, AREZZO.

up their arms. Under this is written: *Il Commune pelato*—the people fleeced. *Pasce oves meos*, indeed! You see him as lord—*Come in*

signoria—with assessors to hand; kneeling suitors receive his decree. He builds the walls, habited now as a general, in mail, riding a heavy horse. Then begins the series of his conquests. Lucignano he took; he sits in his pavilion and imposes his terms upon abject Lucignanesi; Chiusi, Fronzola, Castel Focognano, Rondine—why go on? He pulled down Laterina to spite the Ubertini; he left not stone upon stone. He got Città di Castello by treachery and connivance in the night. Branca Guelfucci was tyrant there, but the Bishop drove him out and kept his State. This and his exploit in Lombardy when, in defiance of authority and interdict, he crowned Lewis the Bavarian with his own hands in Milan, were his top of offences in Tuscany, in Italy indeed. From all sides came embassies to Florence for help against this devouring Bishop, from Perugia, Orvieto, Siena, from Gubbio, from Bologna. But the Bishop and his friend Castruccio held between them the East and the West; and then there was the Emperor, who, if not friendly to the man who had made him so, could have no genius for friendship. All that happened was that Pope John XXII., from his safe distance of Avignon, excommunicated Guido until he should give up Città di Castello, and relinquish his lordship of Arezzo. The Bishop, you may be sure, did neither. Now, a Ubertini was at this time provost of the church at Arezzo, and Guido knew quite well that the Pope's move had been inspired by this man or his friends. Therefore he demolished a Ubertini castle at Laterina. The Pope replied by a deprivation, which (no doubt) lost a good deal of force

as it voyaged out from Avignon. However, the Cardinal Legate read the Act publicly in the Piazza Santa Croce of Florence; the Bishop was unbishoped, and Provost Ubertini bishoped instead; "but," says the chronicler, "he got little out of that, for with all the help of the Pope and Cardinal Legate he could not obtain one penny of

VASARI'S PIAZZA, AREZZO.

his dues. For all the temporalty and spiritualty of Arezzo were held by the said Guido Tarlati, and he was tyrant and lord."

Tyrant and lord! Death was the only deprivation for such a man, and death paid him a visit in 1327. He (the Bishop, that is) went in force to Pisa, to help the Emperor and Castruccio get the town. They got it; then he and Castruccio fell out over some triviality and

His respectable end.

came to injurious words, and with these, "bickering like daws," into the Emperor's presence. Castruccio called the Bishop traitor, saying that when he beat the Florentines at Altopascio, if the Aretines had come in force down the Val d' Arno, as they had promised, the Florentines would not have stood—and this is probably true. The Bishop called him "Traitor again." Who but Castruccio had driven Uguccione della Faggiuola out of Pisa, him and all the good Ghibellini? Who had thriven on Aretine money? Who had broken treaties? etc., etc. There was no lack of recrimination, and little of the subject matter of it. The Emperor listened to it all without partiality. He did not praise the Bishop, and he did not reprove Castruccio. Whereupon Bishop Guido flings out of Pisa in a fume, rides fast and far into the south country, sickens at Montenero in the Maremma, and there dies—1327. He made "a good death," as they say, pricked by mortification or conscience, God (who judges hearts) knows which. He admitted that he was a sinner against Pope John and Holy Church. He renounced the Emperor as heretic, and foster-father of all the heretics. He went so far as to confess John XXII. wise and holy—*santo e giusto*—which testifies, surely, more to the credit of his heart than to that of his judgment. "With many tears he declared his repentance, and cried for mercy. He had the sacrament of Holy Church, and in this contrition died—which was considered in Tuscany a great thing." No doubt it was. That sardonic tomb shows it all; never was such a picture of *Vana Gloria.* Made bishop—hailed for lord—fleeces the commune—

sits as tyrant—builds walls, storms citadels, takes homages, sets up, pulls down, crowns an emperor—and, for last scene, *La morte di miseria*, miserable death! This work was done by Agostino and Agnolo of Siena, 1330, three years after the old sinner's wailing end. It is the most instructive thing in Arezzo, which fell on evil days after his, was handed about from tyrant to tyrant, snatched in 1336 by Florence, owned by the Duke of Athens in 1342; free the next year; besieged, sacked, and sold by the Sieur Enguerrand de Coucy, a freebooter from Flanders, in 1384; sold that time finally to Florence.[1]

Arezzo itself.

The result of an alien occupation of such duration has been to turn a city, whose citizens were full of character, into a little Florence; you may call it, if you will forgive a not too bad joke, the Medication of Arezzo. One would have liked to see the town which those mountain-lords and robber-bishops had made for themselves; but one cannot. One can only see where they went to church. Two great churches there are. The cathedral, which dominates the place from the rock of the citadel, was built by a Ubertini Bishop, Guglielmino by name, and continued by Bishop Guido in his odd moments. Very French outside, of great height, great length, and little width, it is extremely solemn within—dark, heavy, inspiring the true Gothic alternations of spirit, the *Quid sum miser*, and *Judex ergo*, the veiled eyes, crouching knees; and then, with lifted heart and hands, the *O altitudo!* I hardly know better Gothic in Italy,[2] and

[1] See Appendix to this Chapter: History of Arezzo.

[2] San Galgano, south of Siena, a ruin, is better.

deny that San Francesco at Assisi comes near it. Everything goes to make mystery. There is very little painting in the church; painting is an explicit art. There are several great tombs set in the walls—the Bishop's the greatest—and in a side chapel, behind a fine grille, some Della Robbia wares of the best time. These, again, with their serene, patent, Tuscan ways, and that trick they have of taking you by the hand, as if to say, "Let us keep together; there is nothing to be afraid of"—these familiar, happy things might break the impression, if you could see them. But fortunately you may pace the long nave in absolute gloom without any ray of comfort from them; or you may kneel by the choir-wall while the Bishop says Mass or the canons sing their office, and see near by you some scanty-haired, grey-faced old woman rock herself about or beat her poor head against the stone. If you wish Della Robbia companionship, it is not here that you must seek it. It is very possible, I think, that there is too much of it in Tuscany; at any rate, there is no doubt but that it is intended for the light of day and the open air.

Vasari and his betters.

You must pass over a good deal of Vasari on your way down from here, his house, his loggia, and some abominable painting in San Francesco, happily on canvas, removable and removing. It is a point which might have held the philosophic pen of Lessing, why it is that a man may twaddle in letters and rarely fail to please, while his brother, twaddling in such an art as painting, or in architecture, will most inevitably be damned. Here Vasari is very much to the point. The praise of his *Lives* is for its

twaddle; the twaddle of his painting and building is their condemnation. For if his pictures are tawdry rant, these pompous palace-fronts and ceremonious plaster arcades are no better. They are court-painting, they are on a par with the *perruquier's* art. They mean nothing but obsequiousness, and tell nothing but lies. Better stuff is hard by. Standing in the piazza you see a bleak old tower of grey and the apse of a church. Both belong to Santa Maria della Pieve, which is still a noble building, and almost all that is left to remind you of Arezzo's stormy eld. Bishop Guido may have officiated here, in pontificals, with his byrnie underneath; and here stalked towards his God some Conte Guido or another; and here the Duke of Athens, or Sieur de Coucy, may well have been enthroned "Tyrant and Lord," and pedlar also of the Aretine dominion. Margaritone of this town, happier with the hod than the paint-pot, built the church, which has a square Roman front, triple-rowed with arches, a deeply-recessed portal, and a Madonna in the soffit, crowned and girdled —of such singular charm that one does not willingly leave her for long together. She is stiff, like a doll, has a very slim waist, is gorgeously dressed, and looks as incompetent as a queen ought to be. This is the kind of wondrous, remote lady a man could spill his blood for. She is the kind that would stand still, stiffly smiling, amid the tossing swords and hoarse acclaims of her slaves. Believe me, if you are to have an idol at all, she must be of the Hindoo pattern— vacant-eyed, dumb, frozen out of human ken. Adorable Madonna delle Pieve! She must have

been often in the battle, carried swaying to victory—a smiling, glittering, senseless, beautiful dolt. If Bishop Guido Tarlati did not make the hill-towns acquainted with her glorious inanity he was not the man I read him to have been.[1] . . .

The milliner a trope.

She is flesh and a little blood, my poor milliner; but she is a trope as well. She and dead Bishop Guido may stand for Arezzo between them, where the old and the new lie down side by side; the old content to sleep in the sun, the new awaiting with confidence the time when they too may sleep. Meantime these work all day for the few sols they need, and everybody seems as happy as a canary in a cage. What is become of the hot blood, the murdering, the night alarms, the wild party cries, the raids of hill thieves, which made Arezzo a hornet's nest intolerable to the Florentine bees? Burnt out, died out, or starved out. Meantime the great white oxen slowly pad

[1] A great painter came to Arezzo from Borgo over the hill, filled the choir of San Francesco with pageantry, and got much quiet, painter's happiness in between. This was Piero della Francesca. The *Invention of the True Cross*, for that is his theme, gives occasion for all that is expected of a fresco painter of tastes heraldic and processional—a varied story, solemn disputations of great folk, war-pieces with banners and flying horsemen, buildings, distant prospects, and as much familiar detail as you choose. It is a great and a good story, which begins with Adam in Eden, and ends with Heraclius at the Battle of the Danube. It has tempted all sorts of men, for it has murder enough for Matteo of Siena, who, when he was not dreaming of pale women in golden rooms, saw a sword at every throat, and ruffians doing slaughter-house work in every piazza; there are fine ladies for Ghirlandajo; angels, wise merchants, and saucy boys for Benozzo Gozzoli; and for Paolo Uccello big-bellied Flemish horses and spears against the sky. What Piero made of all this pomp and circumstance—save that he added much fine heraldry—is not very extraordinary; but his own harvesting is a very different matter. One may take it that the trappings only interested him as a set-off to his landscape. That is exquisitely beautiful and true. His palette is the nearest to Tuscany of any painter before him or since. Looked at from that standpoint, these frescoes are masterpieces.

their day's round, the driver of the hotel omnibus lies lazy on his perch exchanging ejaculations with the facchino. A boy runs down the broad street crying the *Corriere della Sera*, a pretty pale girl in a lavender blouse looks out of an upper window and throws him down a soldo. Up he runs with his wares. By-and-by a burly young man, with his hat tilted back, will sit upon a certain table and read the news-sheet as he bites his cigar, and three slim backs will be bent over sewing-machines. A trotting man comes along the street to light the lamps; the day is over. They have locked up the church doors, and left Bishop Guido in his tomb to deal with the old ghosts as best he may.

APPENDIX

HISTORICAL NOTES ON AREZZO

To be *umbilicus Italiæ* is to fill a necessary, if menial, office without much profit to the performer; for it does not at all follow that he in whom things centre is himself the centre of things. Thus it has been with that fine city of Arezzo which, lying at the entry of four fruitful valleys, has been preyed upon from all sides, but was never able to push herself far up any one of them. The most beautiful ways of Tuscany spring out of Arezzo; she were more truly called the heart than the navel. For the Arno, running due south from its well in Falterona, turns within three miles of Arezzo to make a northerly course again; and thus two valleys can conduct two hosts of enemies into the plain. Down the Casentino the people of Romagna and the Lombards can get in, and in times past Arezzo could never keep them out for long. By the Val d' Arno she was fatally in touch with Florence. But that is not all. South of Arezzo runs the broad Val di Chiana with a forked road midway; by one

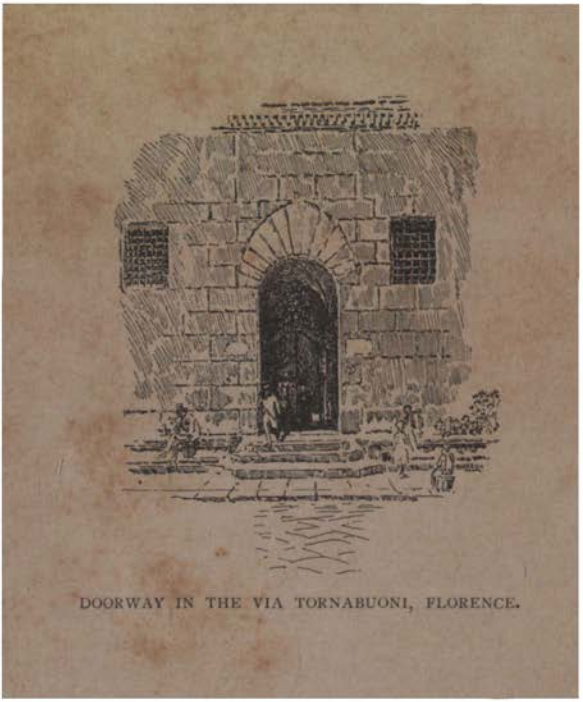
prong the Perugians had easy access, and not they only, but the Orvietans and Viterbans on their backs, and all the power of Rome; upon the other there was nothing but valour to oppose the men of Montepulciano, or the chivalry of Siena and all her subject nations; and these indeed had yet another valley to choose—that Val d' Ambra which meets Val d' Arno above Montevarchi, and so helped Siena to join hands with Florence in crushing the unhappy Aretines. So Arezzo would seem marked out for a warfare more bitter than any other Tuscan city's, and a servitude more abject than even Pisa's was. There is, however, this to be observed, that the town which served Tuscany for a navel, did actually serve her immediate country-folk for a heart. Approach by any one of these valleys you will see evidences of what I mean. Come up the Val di Chiana from Sinalunga; you will have passed Torrita, you will have still to pass Fojano, Lucignano, Castiglione Fiorentino, and other hill-castles before you get to l' Olmo—the place of the great elm which was Arezzo's old boundary. So, coming by Florence; so, coming by the Casentino, on whose wooded rocks Poppi, Bibbiena, Subbiano, and half a score other wild citadels are perched. Every crag in these romantic glens had its robber-chief; and every cut-throat of them ran to Arezzo in his need. The Pazzi, the Ubertini, the Conti Guidi (a brood of eaglets), the Tarlati, all great hill-names, lived hereabouts, and made havoc of the vales. In crushing Arezzo, therefore, Florence was working out the salvation of all Tuscany. There were those wide-reaching, romantic Conti Guidi, for instance. From Monte Morello above Fiesole, by the Mugello to the Sieve, by the slopes of Falterona to the Casentino, thence to Arezzo, you could hardly see a tower which was not theirs, nor enter a village where they had not been beforehand with you. The sod was theirs and the men who passed with the sod. From Guido Sangue, the one child spared in a wholesale massacre, and Gualdrada Berti de' Rovignani of Florence (daughter she was to the good Bellincione) came all the stock. The first war of which there is any record in Florence (after the sack of Fiesole) was with this house over Prato, and the next with them again (in 1146) at Monte di Croce. The Count Guido of the day, in close touch with the Aretines, took his assailants by surprise, and with help from Arezzo, drove them

off with loss. Florence waited for eight years—one knows the Florentine way—before she came on again. This time by treachery she got the castle and the rock, dismantled the first and held the other. "From this time forth the Counts Guidi were no friends to the commune of Florence, nor the Aretines either who had favoured them." That Monte di Croce can still be seen on the cliffs above Incisa. It is one of half a hundred between Florence and Arezzo, any one of which might have made the valley impassable. It is not at all extraordinary that from this day to the end of the fourteenth century there was no long stay of war with Arezzo.

Nor is there any wonder in the fact that, while Florence was Guelf, Arezzo was always Ghibelline. She would have been little profit to the hill-chiefs all about her if she had been anything else. They being feudatories of the Empire, of Frankish stock one and all, were for Cæsar to a man. Under one bishop or another the fortune of war fluctuated—now on one side, now on the other. Guglielmino degli Ubertini was the first Bishop of Arezzo—"more a man of war than of honesty in clerkship," says the chronicler—to make himself tyrant, to "signoreggiare," to lord it there. He did it by strategy, as you may suppose. In June 1287 a league was made in the town by the Guelfs under Rinaldo de' Bostoli and the Ghibellines under Messer Tarlato Tarlati to tread the people down. They attacked the palace of the commune, took the Capitano del Popolo and put out his eyes. Bostoli and his Guelfs, movers of the whole plot, thought themselves safe. But the Ghibellines went over to the Bishop, and he, with his friends of the hills—Buonconte of Montefeltro, Pazzi of Valdarno,—and his own kin, prepared a night attack which was successful. The Guelfs fled the city and sheltered in various castles down the valley—Rondine, Monte Sansavino, and others. The imperial vicar came to Arezzo from the north—Prezzivalle dal Fiesco was his resonant name—and began reprisals upon the low-lying country. Montevarchi suffered, and San Giovanni. Then the Guelfs of Arezzo made a league with Florence, and general war began which ended at Campaldino. That battle seems to belong to the next chapter.

From that victory which put Florence at the head of all North Tuscany, they got without difficulty near half the

Aretine country. They got Bibbiena, Castiglione Aretino, Montecchio, Rondine, Civitella, Laterina, Monte Sansavino, and might have had Arezzo with a little effort. As it was they contented themselves with building a few wooden towers (which the Aretines burnt), and with running their *palio* of St. John Baptist's day outside the walls, and returned to Florence and to triumph in July. All these places were retaken by the Aretines within thirty years; for Bishop Guido arose, a greater than Bishop Guglielmino, of whom I have already spoken.



DOORWAY IN THE VIA TORNABUONI, FLORENCE.

CHAPTER XXIX

AREZZO TO FLORENCE: THE CASENTINO, THE CONSUMA

THERE are two ways from Arezzo to Florence, by either of which you may follow a segment of the circle which Arno makes between those cities. By the lower road you follow the river down-stream through Laterina, Montevarchi, San Giovanni, Figline, to Pontassieve; by the upper, through a valley called Casentino, you go up-stream from Giovi through Bibbiena, leave the river near Castel San Nicolò, and rejoin it at Pontassieve, after it has run its huge circuit round about Pratomagno. I have no hope that I have made myself clear; nothing but a map and a carriage will do that; but it is the fact that Pratomagno, a great outlying mass of the Apennines, is, as it were, the axle-tree of wheeling Arno. There is the choice; the lower road gives the more river, and a better level; the upper road some mountain scenery on either hand, two finely-placed little towns, some memories, a battle-field and a pass, which, though it is not the highest of all the Apennine passes, is one of the most fatiguing.

The ways of Arno.

It is hilly to Laterina, where Bishop Guido had a castle—indeed, castles of his are scattered down all these reaches as far as Incisa—but from that point onwards you never leave the river level, except for a moment at Incisa. Montevarchi is a dull and dirty town, with a vile inn full of fleas. San Giovanni is much better; a pretty country place with an inn covered with cluster roses, and two fine churches to its name. Masaccio the painter was born here, and one Giovanni Manozzi, commonly called Da San Giovanni, another painter of one good picture, and a great many bad ones. His good picture is that black-and-white wonder of light, air, and high spirits which you see in the southern arm of the Uffizii; his bad ones are here in his native town. As for the great Masaccio, I desire above all things to be respectful to a man whom my betters have greatly respected; but for the life of me I cannot get a pulse quickened in the Carmine. Mr. Berenson, for instance, feels that he could "touch every figure," in those Brancacci frescoes; "that it would yield a definite resistance to his touch," that he would "have to expend thus much effort to displace it," that he could "walk around it." Well, given a reasonable artistic imagination in the spectator, that would be possible with any set of diagrams in Italy. To me these things of Masaccio's are diagrams—dull diagrams without poetry, charm, or significance. Fresco is an art whose very technique should inspire, as it certainly calls for, spontaneity, lyrical elevation, a cry or a song. It is a water art, therefore it should be fresh, pure, wholesome, and cool.

The lower road.

Masaccio's is none of these. It is a wall-decoration on a large scale: there should therefore be pattern or colour in masses. Masaccio has no pattern, and his colour is dirty. Giotto is out of the reckoning just now; I am not talking of genius. Just compare this Masaccio with the greatest fresco-painter (I speak as a fool, *però*,

ON THE CONSUMA.

in good company) that Florence ever knew: I mean Fra Angelico. I have said already, and I say again, that more sufficient, more exquisite, more spontaneous wall-pictures cannot be conceived of than those of the dormitories and cells of Saint Mark's. They are so imaginative, the illusion is perfect; they are so delicate, one would not dare—not even Mr. Berenson would dare—try his test of the finger upon them. They

report fairy tales, they take you into Faërie. They are momentary, and yet, to all intent, imperishable things. They give the colour of poppies and corn-cockles to those pure walls; they are so clean that one feels the cleaner for an hour with them. Stimulation of "tactile consciousness" is far from them; they stimulate our far better part. But to return to Masaccio, if only to admit my own unhappy state, I have never found that he stimulated anything at all. The happier are Mr. Berenson and the learned in that, not insensible to Fra Angelico, they can get their pleasure out of Masaccio. Here, at San Giovanni in Val d' Arno, they may apostrophise his birthplace if they will. I should have done homage, on the other hand, at Manozzi's if I could have found it; but the sacristan of the Cathedral knew very little about him.

The upper road: Bibbiena.

I have never seen the Casentino in that state described by wretched Maestro Adamo's crackling tongue—onomatopœic lines of matchless power that they are:—

> Li ruscelletti che dei verdi colli
> Del Casentin discendon giuso in Arno,
> Facendo i lor canali freddi e molli,
> Sempre mi stanno innanzi. . . .

The hills have always been grey when I have seen them, either wet and lurid as when a storm brooded over the river, or bleached nearly to whiteness by drought. Certainly I have travelled finer roads and seen finer sights in other parts of this country.

To reach it, you leave Arezzo by San Clemente, or circle that city's walls more than half—an agreeable thing to do, since the road is treeful;

from San Clemente you cut straight across the valley of the Chiassa, and begin to get among the hills at a mean village called Giovi. This plain of the Chiassa differs in nowise from any other Tuscan valley: orderly husbandry, cropped trees, dry river-beds, much dust. Caliano has a castle and a bridge, Subbiano a bridge and a

PIAZZA, BIBBIENA.

castle—and a weir over the river which I should like the fishing of in April. Above this the Arno runs through a rocky gorge, and the higher you go the better it becomes. The colouring is beautiful—a river of pale green, swift, broken water, silver poplars above it, a white pebble beach on either side. So you mount the road to Montealto, where there is a castle at the mouth of a great combe. It is a huge, red pile of building;

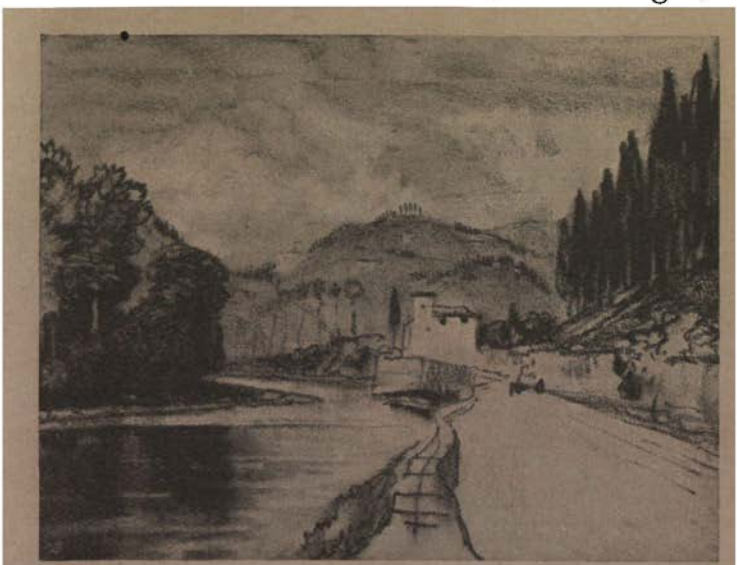
and above it is Monte Calenaja, a barren grey fell, strewn with boulders of rock.

The hills near Rassina are scald-headed, pale and dreary: so pale, indeed, that under the merciless sun they shed a reflected light upon the valley, which is narrow here and edged with patchy poplars. After Rassina they open out somewhat, and on a little one in the midst stands Bibbiena, a brown, walled village with a tower at each end. Exactly behind Bibbiena is Monte Penna, a mountain of some size. In the recesses of that is La Verna, which mysterious retreat was chosen by the Burning Seraph for his sealing of Francis. There is a great convent of Friars Minor there which Mr. Pennell has seen, but I have not.

In the church of this narrow-laned town there are two Della Robbia's—one a *Deposition*, all pale blue and white, one an *Adoration*, with green rocks for the cave, and a charming heavenly choir above. Now the experts in this ware go by colour very largely, and would probably ascribe the *Deposition* to Luca and the *Adoration* to anybody but him. There I hold that they would be wrong. There are passages in this last piece—a cherub peering down upon the Babe, with clasped hands and rapt childish interest, which shows real insight into the ways of children; shepherds, too, upon the hill, with dogs beside them, all gazing upwards at the star—things of this sort which, in my belief, Luca only could do, because Luca was the only craftsman among them who happened to be more than a craftsman, a poet undoubtedly, and an artist, whatever that sadly-abused word may imply.

Bibbiena.

But poet, I hope, is unequivocal enough. I once went through the Bargello without a catalogue and without help of the superscriptions, and tried to identify Luca by a plan of my own. He was one of the few sculptors who could express not so much bodily movement,[1] as mental, as emotional movement also. This was his "gift,"



UPPER VAL D' ARNO.

as we say. One or two painters had it—Neri di Bicci, Baldovinetti, the Sienese Sassetta: quite indifferent painters in everything else. With that clue in my head, I fancy that I succeeded in seven cases out of ten; in the other three the ascription, let us say, may well have been wrong. There is no doubt whatsoever as to the merits of these two Bibbiena things: the

[1] In that Donatello beat him, and Verrocchio too.

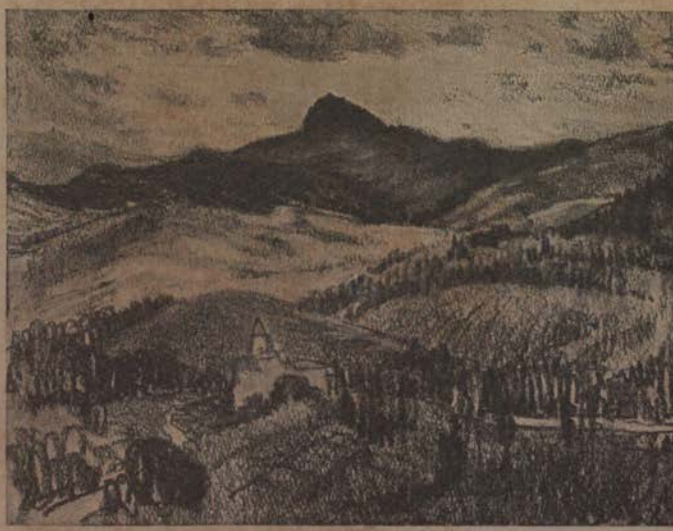
Deposition is as inane as wax-works, the *Adoration* is instinct with passion, wonder, rapture, all sorts of emotions with which craftsmen can do nothing and poets everything. There is nothing else to see in Bibbiena except the view of Poppi from the Citadel—Poppi on a hill, the counterpart of Bibbiena's, with an intolerable castle of severe grey, trees and little houses huddling beneath it like chicks under the mother's wing. It is by no means a fine castle, but for its size—a perfectly square block with a tower at one end like the smoke-stack of a locomotive. But its bigness is very impressive; it obliterates everything, and is said to have a good court and staircase, on the plan of the Florentine Bargello.

The Consuma: Campaldino.

You leave the Arno at Poppi, and from the top of the spiral road by which you climb to the Consuma you have a view of Castel San Nicolò and the field of Campaldino. A plain it is called in the accounts, but it is rather a great down, sloping gently to the river. There is then a broad field of fairly level country on two sides of a brook. The whole position is not unlike that of Lewes.

As for Campaldino, the story of the great rout is familiar, or ought to be if it is not. It is one of the critical points of early Tuscan story, one of the few decisive battles of that vexed tale. You can read it in Villani: how Aymery of Narbonne led the Guelfic League and Gherardo Tornaquinci bore the royal standard of Anjou; what a host of them—knights from Florence, Lucca, Prato, Pistoja, as of course; the Sienese to avenge a former smart, the Volterrani,

Sangimignanesi, Colligiani — went by the way of the Casentino wasting the lands of Count Guido; how they were met by the Aretines in the plain at the foot of Poppi "in a plain called Campaldino, in the village called Certomondo"; how eagerly the gage of battle was thrown down, and how joyfully taken up. One must needs



LA VERNA FROM BIBBIENA.

admire the gallantry of the Aretines. They despised their enemy, "saying that they preened themselves like women and braided their hair"; they had twelve captains of their battalions, whom they called the Twelve Paladins; nothing could stay them from attack. All this, in the rough, is in the true great manner of the Song of Roland. But chivalry in Tuscany was an exotic growth, imported but never sane. If Guido Novello of

Poppi was Roland he proved a craven; and if Bishop Guglielmino was to stand for the great Archbishop Turpin he would have been little comfort at Roncesvalles. For Count Guido Novello, who was to strike in on the Florentine flank with 150 knights, held back from the first onslaught to see how the battle went, and misdoubting his strength fled to his castles in the hills: so much for the Aretine Roland. As for the bishop, the chief reason for the hastening of him by his party seems to have been lest he should have time to make a pact with the Florentines by which he was to cede to them all his riverine castles in return for 5000 gold florins a year for the rest of his life. Some such terms had been actually proposed. So they urged him forward in a hurry. Such were the Paladins of Tuscany. Corso Donati, the great turbulent Florentine—Il Barone as they afterwards called (before they killed) him—played a nobler part. He was Podestà of Pistoja at this time, and had been ordered to stand his ground with the Pistojesi and Lucchesi, and not to attack "on pain of losing his head." The Florentines were in the van and bore the first brunt. But Corso, "when he saw the battle begun, cried out like a brave man, 'If we are to lose I will die in battle with my own people; and if we are to win let them come to Pistoja to judge me.' Whereupon he freely moved his company, and struck the enemy in the flank, and was the greatest cause of their rout. And this done, as it pleased God, the Florentines had the day, and the Aretines were routed and discomfited, and there were killed more than 1700

of horse and foot, taken more than 2000." Among those killed were the treacherous, tyrannous, fighting Bishop Ubertini, Guglielmino de' Pazzi, his nephew, "who was the best and most-wary Captain of War in the Italy of his day." Buonconte, son of Count Guido da Montefeltro, —and how he, being struck mortally in the throat,

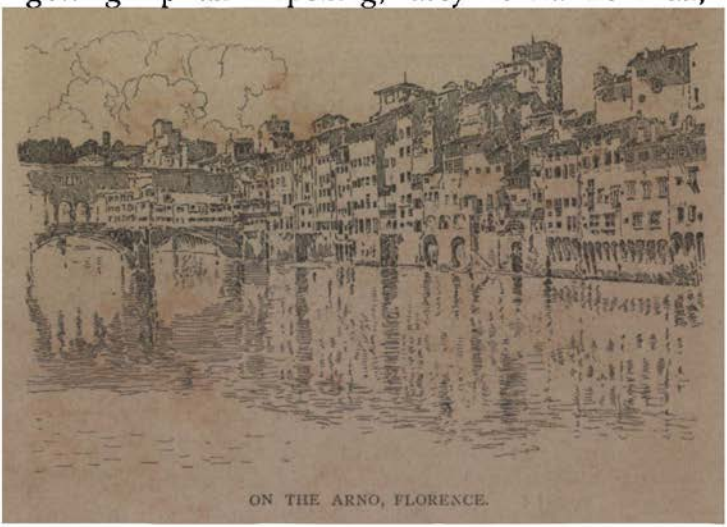
THE VALLEY OF THE UPPER ARNO.

fled up the gorge of the Archiano torrent—and there—

> "My sight failed me, and all my breath
> Ended in Mary's name; I fell
> There, and my flesh stayed still with Death."

—all this you shall read in the Purgatorio. Three of the Uberti they lost, one of the Abati, two of the Griffoni of Fegghine—and Guiderello d' Alessandro of Orvieto who carried the Eagle of the Empire. The Florentines lost, but not nearly so heavily, nor men of such mark. It was a momentous victory, and, as was proper,

marvels were not wanting to impress it on the mind. For the news was known on the very day and at the very hour that it was made. "After breaking their fast," Villani says, "our lords the Priors had gone to sleep and rest themselves from the fatigues of a night of vigil; and suddenly there was knocking at the door, with a cry, 'Get up, get up, for the Aretines are undone!' And getting up and opening, they found no man,



ON THE ARNO, FLORENCE.

nor had their servants outside heard anything; whereof was great marvel, and this held for a notable thing. For it was the hour of Vespers before anybody from the host came with the news."

I could not find the Archiano, whose flood carried Buonconte down to the sea; but Mr. Gardner was more fortunate, or more careful. He says it is "about an hour's walk from the battle-field, perhaps a mile from the foot of the hill

on which Bibbiena stands." This is vexatious, because I must actually have driven over it. He speaks of it as "banked with poplars and willows"—which reads like a sluggish stream rather than a torrent.

As for the Consuma pass, I have to say that it is not the place in which to be overtaken by a thunderstorm. That was my lot. I remember the sheeted rain, the knocking of the heavenly artillery; the road a foaming water-course—darkness, fury, and a shrieking wind—and, in a white vision revealed, a tall shepherd fighting his way against it, leaning on a staff, his clothing streaming like a flag behind him.

CHAPTER XXX

CONCLUSION: THE HEART OF THE COUNTRY

LET it be assumed, for argument's sake, that I have made one thing—nay, two things—clear up to this point: the first, that the heart of Tuscany is worth the getting at; the second, that there is no sure road to it through the plastic arts. Architecture, sculpture, painting (according to me) show the Tuscan as a charming, accomplished, ingenious, and wholesome creature; they evince his happy, childish fancy; they show him, even if he be picking over garbage, as undefiled by the performance, and transmuting the dross he picks up into the prettiest filigree-gold you can care to have. But they do not reveal the deeps of him, if deeps he have. The limpidity of the Della Robbia, the exquisite impertinence of the Desiderios and Minos, the amorous reveries of Botticelli, even the crystal perfection of Ghirlandajo, when you have pierced the enamel of their extraordinary accomplishment, and have allowed for a certain deal of observation in the artists, give you proof of just so much trifling with matters of moment, or with matters which would be of moment to anybody else.

An argument resumed,

Love, life, death, heaven, hell, to all the people upon earth, are mute familiars of the hearth. These are the gods we needs must worship, and cannot worship ignorantly. What have the Tuscans to say to them? Can we by any means be present at their secret rites? Not by any means open to us so far; for it is clear, I think, that although, in plastic art, manual facility may deceive the heart of the worker, it can never for any serious moment deceive that of the beholder. The artist's passion may all flow out at his finger-tips. I believe that the Tuscan artists' did. There remain to us the arts of music and poetry. Here I deal with the latter.

We must begin by cutting Dante out of the argument, for reasons which have already been shadowed. Some men may be too frivolously minded to deal with realities; others too seriously minded to deal with them before the vulgar. Dante was one of such. and restated: Poetry.

> O voi che avete gl' intelletti sani,
> Mirate la dottrina che s' asconde
> Sotto il velame degli versi strani!

He was telling a Mystery; but there remain great men enough, and men of copious performance. If all of these rhymers, from Fazio and Folgore to Petrarch and Cino, thence onwards in ever-increasing battalions, Sacchetti, Boccaccio, Bojardo, the Pulci, Politian, Lorenzo, Bembo, on and on to Guarini, Metastasio, and Bernardino Perfetti —if all these people, I say, were poets indeed, there should be no trouble in finding the way to the heart of Tuscany; for poetry is an art which absolutely demands an emotional impulse before a note of the music can be uttered.

Well, but are they true poets? Are their verses the lyrical equivalent of their passion? Can we read the Aretine heart of Petrarch, or the Pistolese heart of Cino, as we can read the Cockney heart of Chaucer or the Lowland heart of Burns? This is worth thinking about, not because it is the way to appraise great poetry—the valuation of great poetry is by no means our present business; not for any such reason as that, but rather because we desire a short road into the Tuscan heart.

A Test for Petrarch and others.

Looking upon poetry, then, as a road to the heart, let me inquire if there is any direct road through Petrarch, or any Tuscan poet whomsoever, comparable to such as Burns's "O wha my babie-clouts will buy?" or (since the bravado of that is a transparent veil) to "Ae fond kiss"? I don't intend to quote Petrarch again. I asked the same question about him before, and cited him to give weight to my answer;[1] but then I put him side by side with Dante. To-day I am perhaps pitching the battle rather low, not asking of the man and his school any stave comparable to the solemn ruminations of great Wordsworth or the erotic raptures of young Keats. I don't ask them whether they ever entangled their love-thoughts in such fantastic embroidery as Shakespeare his in his sonnets, or Marlowe his in his suggestive narration. No; but I say that Petrarch was a lover, Cino a lover, Lorenzo a lover—or so they thought. Did their love-stress burn as clear in them as his in Byron

[1] I beg to refer the curious reader to *Earthwork out of Tuscany*, chap. iv., "Of Poets and Needlework."

—foolish, petulant, self-enwrapt, magnificent, downright Byron? You will get nothing of this kind in any Tuscan whose writings are known to me.

Here is Lorenzo to a woman whom he thought to love:—

Lorenzo.

O chiara stella, che co' raggi tuoi
Togl' all' *altre vicine stelle il lume*,
Perchè splendi assai *più che il tuo costume?*
Perchè con Febo ancor contender vuoi?
Forse i begli occhi, i quali ha tolto a noi
Morte crudel ch' omai troppo presume,
Accolti hai in te: adorna del lor lume,
Il suo bel carro a Febo chieder puoi.
O questo o nuova stella che tu sia
Che di splendor novello adorni il cielo,
Chiamata esaldi, o nume, i voti nostri.
Leva dello splendor tuo tanta via;
Che agli occhi che han d' eterno pianto zelo,
Senz' altra offension, lieta ti mostri.

Now that, in the sense of accomplishment and a handsome compliment to a woman, is nearly as good as can be; for it is accomplished enough to know that a common word, if it will do the work, is infinitely better than an uncommon one. Dante proves that over and over again, and here the phrases I have italicised are really prose made lyrical by feeling. *Più che il tuo costume:* a common tag of every day. Very happy, very dextrous; and yet the thing tells you nothing except that the writer was a clever fellow.

But, O Heaven!

Shakespeare.

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
And like enough thou knowest thy estimate:
The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
My bonds in thee are all determinate.

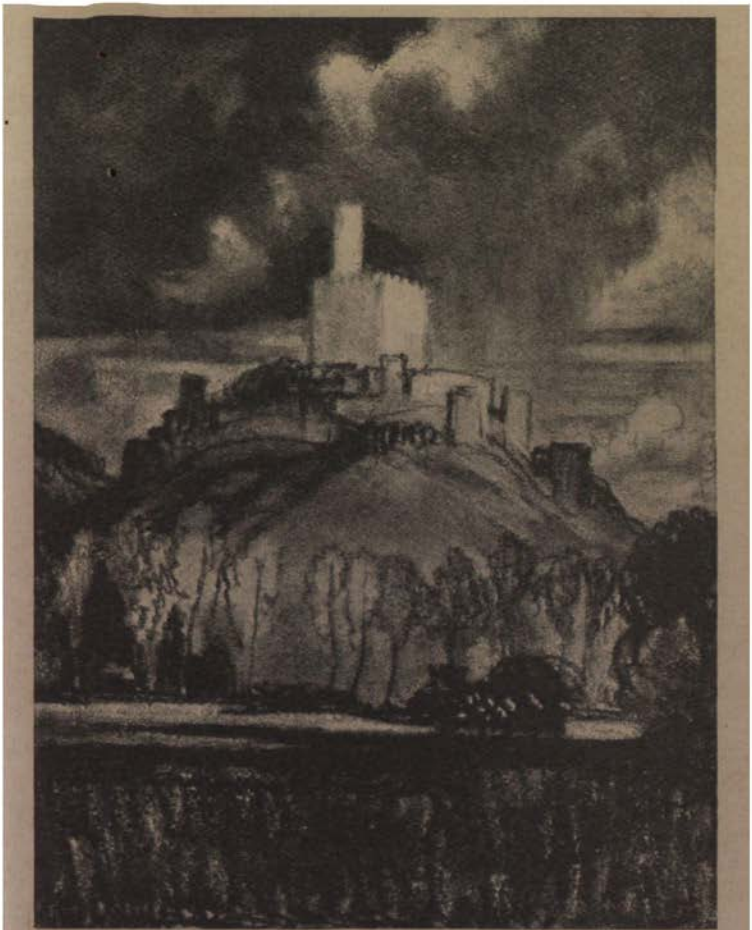
For how do I hold thee but by thy granting?
And for that riches where is my deserving?
The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
And so my patent back again is swerving.
Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking;
So thy great gift, upon misprisions growing,
Comes home again, on better judgment making.
Thus have I had thee as a dream doth flatter—
In sleep a king; but waking, *no such matter.*

In artifice the same; yet Shakespeare's prothonotary terms show us the man's golden heart. In skill, of the same degree, for his "no such matter" is exactly as powerful and as commonplace as Lorenzo's "il tuo costume." And yet—the two have only to be juxtaposed.[1]

Where, then, are we now? Why, here, I think: that Tuscan poetry, highly educated, highly sophisticated as it was, juggled with the passions and emotions just as the other arts did in that country; that Tuscan poems are about anything or nothing, and mean little more than

[1] I say nothing here of narrative poetry: epic, so called. There are a few Tuscan folk-ballads to put beside our *Chevy Chase* and *Jamie Telfer*, our *Binnory O!* and *Berkshire Tragedy*. Mr. Symonds quotes two, *Ginevra* and *L' Avvelenato*; and Professor Tigri says that there was one upon Paris and Vienne, of which I have only seen extracts. But those two which I have seen whole do not show much of the romantic spirit. The Tuscans were not, indeed, romantically inclined—the least mystical of people, though I observed that Mr. Maugham, in a recent work, says that Florence was a city of mystics. Mystics in Florence! It seems to have been otherwise in Piedmont. Miss E. M. Clerke cites the *Donna Lombarda*, a most dramatic, tragic, and romantic narrative. As to the Tuscan sham epics, from the *Teseide* to those of Roland and Renaud, I have not concealed my opinion of their worth whenever they have crossed the road. It is not necessary that an artificial epic should glorify a national hero; Milton's did not, nor did Virgil's. The destiny of Rome is Virgil's theme: *Tantæ molis erat* is the key-phrase. But the *Morgante*, the two *Orlandos*, the *Giostra*, the *Gerusalemme*, and all the rest of the frothy affairs glorified nothing but the writer's wit, and there's an end of the matter.

delight in the doing, playful weaving of the fancy, a happy tracing out of phrase-arabesques, a com-



POPPI.

fortable tingling of the vacant walls of the heart's chamber. They do not open the door, nor clear the

road, nor reveal the Tuscan nature. So there's for them; and now let me deal with what does.

Folk-Poets.

In the dewy mountain villages which you and I have traversed of late, on the mossy slopes which overlook Pistoja, in cloud-girt Barga, in San Marcello, and Pracchia, and Cireglio, the people sing songs which they themselves have made. So in the hill country south of Arno, whither we have tended by the valley roads; in San Gimignano, in sheer Volterra, in Cortona, the long grey town; in Pomarance, and Certaldo, and Barberino, there are golden lads and girls who, when they long for one another, sigh in rhythm and fall, when they have bliss of each other thrill like thrushes on April evenings, when they part moan in music, and when they hate give wild lyrical utterance to their heartaches. These are the facts. In Professor Tigri's *Corpus* of this native poetry (*Canti Popolari Toscani:* Florence, Barbèra, 1860) you may run the whole keyboard of the heart of man and woman, under the stress of the one primal passion of love, at least; they sang of very little else then, and so it is now.[1] Some of their songs have been admirably translated by Miss E. M. Clerke, and printed in a little book called *Fable and Song in Italy*, which also gives a no less admirable, though necessarily short commentary upon them. Mr. Symonds has rendered some of them in *Sketches in Italy and Greece* (new edition, vol. ii.), and linked them together in an essay which treats them

[1] I have cited a remarkable exception to this rule. Travel has turned one girl of my acquaintance into a poet. She comes from the Mugello country.

sympathetically, though not from my present standpoint. He sees in them the raw stuff out of which Petrarch fashioned his sugar-bakery. I see them as pathetic little images, too rough not to be sincere, and as different from Petrarch's looking-glass languishings as a girl crying in bed for her lover is from a Fragonard nymph pretending to be coy in a pink and blue bower. The great point, however, which Mr. Symonds makes is very important to you and me. He corroborates Professor Tigri's assertion that these poems are still made by the unlettered poets.

Let us examine into the thing. In Celle, a mountain village above Pistoja, lives Nencina; in Campiglio, on another spur of the Apennines, lives Beppino. She is a tanned little peasant, with green-grey eyes and yellow hair, with strands of gold in it;[1] he is tall and rather lean, has a round, dark head and a sullen look, which, however, belies him. He is not sulky at all, but very shy and conscious of his long legs. The sun, wind, and rain have coloured him as with walnut juice; he is as tough as leather, frugal, simple, and as clean as gold. You may have seen him any day in the slope fields hoeing between the olives, or straying in the clover after his pigs, or digging with a heart-shaped spade whose handle is six feet long —cutting into the juicy marl as if it were cheese.

Fons et Origo.

[1] Most of these girls are very pretty. Stendhal says: "J'ai remarqué de fort beaux yeux chez les femmes de la campagne; mais il n'y a rien dans ces figures de la douce volupté ni de l'air *susceptible de passion* des femmes de la Lombardie. Ce que vous ne trouverez jamais en Toscane, c'est l'air exaltable, mais en revanche, de l'esprit, de la fierté, de la raison, quelque chose de finement provoquant." It is true, so far as it goes, but it certainly does not go into Sienese territory.

A fine young savage, this Beppino, with the starting look of a faun in his eyes; bare except for cotton shirt and breeches, and an old hat. Donatello has made him a dozen times, and Almighty God makes him still by the hundred a week up here in the wet mountain air.

As for Nencina, she goes barefoot too — for wood and water, goose-herding, gleaning, vintaging. She may go out in bevies with her mates, or she may go alone; and if by chance she meet Beppino (which is his business), she will give him "good day," or, if she be in company, a prim little bow of the head in answer to his lowered cap. What has happened to change the relationships of these two — to show him an aureole round her bare head, to touch her tawny hair and turn it to fine gold, to glorify her feet, to give her wings, to set her floating over the ground like a questing angel? Or to put mastery into his brooding eyes, to make the trees bow their heads to him as he walks, the sun announce him, the growing dusk declare him gone? Eh, who knows? I dare swear it began with him. He saw her suddenly, the youngest of the angels, and haunted her whereabouts. Out on the hill, in the sun-steeped misty mornings, who comes slowly round the shoulder of the rock to her pasture-ground? Who lurks in the copse to spy for her! Who loiters about Celle in the evening twilight, when the maids are gossiping on the doorsteps, plaiting their straws, singing, or scolding the children? Who comes kneeling to the sung Mass on Sundays? who dips into the stoup with her? Ah, and who is that who, on moonlight, still nights is standing in the village street,

looking at her window, or haply singing in the silence and dark as he walks alone through sleeping Celle? I think Beppino began it, but am sure that Nencina was aware of its nicest shade of beginning. The point to be remarked upon is this: that, the moment they love, these two innocent dunces begin to sing. Here, again, I am on the facts of the case. **Nota.** This boy in love, this entangled girl, begin to make poems. They sing. So they sang a thousand years ago, so five hundred years ago, so now. Words and music of their song are theirs, the music mainly traditional, the words not all traditional, but varying with the poets and their place in time. Modern things—the *vapore*, the railway, the threshing-machine, conscription, emigration—come in. Professor Tigri, a Pistolese himself, has known lads and lasses touched with this divine fire; Mr. Symonds has heard one of them compose, as he sat, an exile with his comrades, by a Sicilian fire. I, too, have known a girl of the Mugello, who, when she was moved, uttered herself in natural poetry (on post-cards!), than which nothing could be more exquisitely candid, or more exactly just.

I say poet and poem advisedly — for such they certainly are. It is no case of a comforting jingle— **Quality.**

> The rose is red, the violet s blue,
> Sugar is sweet, and sweet are you.

It is to that effect, like all the love-rhyme in the world; but it is poetry. It reveals, it articulates, it informs, pierces, lifts up. It shows, beyond any cavil, that at heart this mountain people is

what the upland Scots have been, what the Icelanders and Norse have been—natural singers, self-revealing only in art, and artists only (like the best of us) when their hearts are touched. Now, since we have been trying throughout this volume to get to the Tuscan heart, since so many pages have been expended to prove that all ordinary channels fail, I have thought it good to end this book with a sight of the true road.

Form.

A word as to the form in which this poetry is expressed. There are two, strictly; but the second, the *stornello*, or snatch, form is too slight for my purpose. The other is the *rispetto*.

Rispetti run in the ordinary eleven-syllabled Tuscan verse, the verse of Dante and Petrarch, with the ordinary weak ending. They may have a quatrain or two quatrains of alternate rhymes, that is, they rhyme A B, A B and (if there is a second quatrain) *da capo*. They must end with a rhymed couplet, or two rhymed couplets. When there is but one couplet, the sense of the quatrain is repeated in it, with varying words; when there are two couplets, the sentiment of the first is repeated in the second with slightly varying words or arrangement. In this case the sense of the quatrain may be left alone. I hope this is clear; but in case it should not be, an example will settle all difficulty.

Here is a simple quatrain to begin with.

A girl sings—

Domenica mattina gentilmente
So dove andesti a far la rifermata;
E c' era gente che ti ponean mente,
Me lo vennero a dire insino a casa.

Observe that *casa* and *ata* are considered an assonance. Now for the couplets—

> Quando me lo dicevono ridevo,
> E poi in camera sola io piangevo.

Second couplet: the words alter, but not the sense—

> Quando me lo dicevano, cantavo,
> E poi in camera sola sospiravo.

To clench all this—which is important—I shall give an English version of Miss Clerke's.

A boy sings—

> Would'st see thy servant die of love straightway,
> Dress not in curls those shining locks of thine;
> But down along thy shoulders let them stray,
> Where they seem strands of gold from out the mine.
> Where they seem chains of finely threaded gold,
> Fair are the locks and fair the head they fold;
> Where they seem skeins of gold and silk most rare,
> Fair are the locks, and she who combs them fair.

So much for poetic form, which in point of accomplishment and dexterity is as little below Petrarch, as in simplicity and candour the matter is far above him. Now for content; and there they beat him altogether, for they at once enfold and inform.

I cannot better Professor Tigri's division of the *rispetti* into all the phases of young love-making, nor begin more reasonably than he does, at the first flush of its dawn. **Content: Love-dreams.**

Here is the picture from her side. She is snug abed with her mother; all still. Then she

hears him come down the street singing softly as he goes. Here she herself sings the facts—

> Last night my love went singing down our street,
> I, wicked one, could listen from my bed:
> I turned to mother, where she lay asleep,
> And on her shoulder cried for that dear lad.
> Now all the pain he gives me on this sheet
> I write; and we shall read them when we're wed.
> And we will read them every one, my heart—
> O my fair love, with witchcraft for thine art!
> And we will read them all, line after line:
> O use more craft, and take the more of mine!

But on his side, when he thinks of her, it is to particularise and enhance every little act of her daily life. "In the morning," he sings, "in the morning when you leave your bed, the clouds fly away, the sun comes up over the mountains to look at you. The angels fly down to help you, to tie your shoes and lace your stays. The church bell rings, you go to mass; all the neighbours stand at their doors to see you go. When you come into church, it is your eyes that light all the candles. You dip your finger in and sign your white forehead—you curtsey and kneel down—and, ah, the grace of you, kneeling pious there!"

Or, thinking of her person, it is of flowers he thinks naturally.

> O gentilina, gentilina tutta!
> Garofanate son vostre parole—

Carnationed are your words! A phrase for Keats.

> E l' alito che v' esce dalla bocca
> Odora più che un mazzo di viole.

All fragrance and her come to him together. *A*

vase of scented water, he calls her: "E sete una caraffa d' acqua lanfa."

Thinking more curiously, more reconditely, he says that when her mother had her to make she went up to high heaven to get counsel how she should go to work. The queen of the gods said, "Leave her making to me." So then the prophets came to model her face—prophets with their incantations and prophesyings; and four gods were called in—Venus, Saturn, Mars, and Narcissus.

She may be very young when all this wonderful service begins to encompass her on every side. He admits it when he sings to her one day— **Youth in love.**

> Giovanettina, che hai quattordici anni,
> Sei piccolina e m' hai cavato il cuore!

Fourteen, did he suppose her? Heavens! hear the imp's own confession—

> Son piccolina, e non ho anche dieci anni;
> Son già segnata al libro dell' amore.

One does not, to be sure, need to be a poetess to be in love at ten years old; but one does to confess it.

To her mother she is very frank. "Mother," says she, "if you will not give me my Beppino I shall go out into the world and never come back. If you were to see him, how straight he is, and how fine; oh, mother, you would fall in love with him yourself. He wears a cloak of three colours, and his name is *Beppino Stealheart*—Beppino Rubacuore." **She confesses,**

He never sings, as she does, this meek kind of strain. **and is humble.**

"High are the walls of your house," she wails, "and mine can never reach them. I am not worthy of your hand, I am not worthy to love you. No, no, nor even worthy to look at you!" Poor little soul—and then she goes on to ask for his pity—

Se non son degna, onde degna ne sia,
Ve lo domando in grazia il vostro amore.
Ve lo domando in grazia et cortesia;
Meriti dame di maggior valore
. . . . .
Per gentilezza ognor ti voglio amare,
Bello, per povertà non mi lasciare.

And again—

"Tell me, dear," she cries, "what I ought to do if I wish to save my soul. I go to church, but there I cannot stay; not even long enough my beads to say. I go to church and nothing can I pray, because I always have thy name at heart. I go to church and nothing can I say, because I think of thee and all thou art."

If the like of these things don't take one into the intimate heart of young lovers, there is nothing for it but to learn Tuscan and renew one's own youth. And let those who fancy that Petrarch, as the greater poet, can take them nearer—try him!

When she is hurt.

Beppino hurts her sometimes; here is a wounded note—

In que' begli occhi ci hai la calamita,
Giovine bello, sappili portare.
Son quelli che consuman la mia vita
Notte nè giorno mi lascian posare,
E non mi lascian posare un' ora:
Padron non è di sè chi s' innamora.

And she can run the whole gamut of unhappy love; here plaintively—

> Sarebbe meio non t' avessi ma' visto,
> La lingua non t' avesse mai parlato:
> Non averei lo mio core afflitto,
> Ne men l' avrei tanto addolorato . . .;

and here a young man writes with real tragic intensity—

> Sono stato all' inferno, e son tornato;
> Misericordia! la gente che c' era!
> V' era una stanza tutt' alluminata,
> E dentro v' era la speranza mia.

There's a wild scene, and how plainly put down! "O I have been in hell, and have come back. Mercy! the folk down there! I saw a chamber all lighted up, and there within it lay my hope." Mr. Symonds has translated the whole of it (*Sketches and Studies*, vol. ii. p. 298).[1]

That is grief made bitter by hopelessness;

[1] Here are two other scraps wrought in misery:—

> Within my breast a candle 's lit,
> And burns within and shows not out.
> Tigri, p. 143.
> Non mi chiamate più biondina bella;
> Chiamatemi biondina isventurata.
> Tigri, p. 146.

And here is dramatic narration: the parting and meeting again of Paris and Vienne. Tigri says, "degni del Tasso." But I say, Tasso could not approach the simplicity of—

> Andar si vede
> In terra, e come morta s' abbandano.
> Più non si regge la meschina in piede,
> E da sè stessa alla terra si dona.
> *Non ode, e pur non sente, nè non vede,*
> Qual è colui che per pietà la sprona
> Quando si pensa esser di vita priva,
> In braccio del suo amor si trovò viva.
> Quando si pensa esser di vita sciolta,
> In braccio del suo amor si trovò tolta.
> Tigri, p. 166.

there is a gentler sort—that of the yearly severance. For Beppino must take his herds down to the Maremma for the winter, or may go thither in June for the harvesting; and Nencina must stay at home and wait for him. She cries—

Parting.

> Tutti mi dicon Maremma, Maremma,
> Ed a me pare una Maremma amare.

Nowadays there is the military service; and in some sort that must always have been a factor. But there is hope to sweeten this cup, and very prettily he can turn it; he says—

> E per segnale lascerò una stella;
> Essa rilucerà sinchè vivo io.

But she cries out to his comrades who are taking him to the depôt—

"Soldier, soldier, off to the wars, keep a kind eye for my lover. Tell him not to shoulder his arms, for he has never been in a battle. Tell him not to sleep under the open sky; and tell him the keys of his heart are in my bosom. Tell him not to sleep in the marshes; and tell him I shall think of him for ever."

And now she is alone—

> I see the rocks for me do weep,
> The mountains open, deep to deep
> Wails, "Now he leaves her, now he goes;
> Cursed be the day that brought these woes."

Here she is watching for him to come back—

> E vedo, e vedo, e non vedo che voglio,
> Vedo le foglie di lontan tremare.
> E vedo lo mio amor in su quel poggio,
> E al piano mai lo vedo calare.

She sends him messages by the birds since she has no other servants. They drop them on the trees by his course—on the trees of Pisa, the trees of Leghorn. And here she cries out upon his road—

The Leghorn road 's a fine affair,
And happy he who fares it.
My love he is its wayfarer,
But, O my heart ! he wears it.
O Leghorn men, tell him the day,
When he may fare the other way !
O Leghorn men, tell him the hour,
And on his bosom lay this flower.

It is very characteristic of Nencina that, when it is her turn to go away—into service, she gives Beppino a little lecture—

Giovanettino, diamoci la mano,
Oggi o domani me ne vado via :
E vado in un paese tanto strano,
Chì sa se non mi mora per la via ?
E s' i' morissi e non tornassi più
Coll' occhi bassi attende alla vertù.

He, on his side, knows her bird-errands and looks out for them—

If on a tree a bird I spy,
He seems to whisper in his way,
Lad, from Pistoja here come I
To greet you from your lovely may.
I answer, Birding, homeward fly,
Be speedy to her lattice, pray.
And you shall see the eyes and face
That drew my poor heart from its place.

Here you have her waiting for him on the rocks. She sees him coming. **Meeting.**

Deccolo là ; che ben vienga, ben vienga !
Deccolo là; che ben venuto sia !
E dategli una seggiola che siegga,
Che fa fiorir le rose per la via.

E fa fiorir le rose e le viole—
Giorno e la notte ti tengo nel core,
Giorno e la notte son ventiquattr' ore—
E venticinque ti tengo nel core!

Divers pangs.

Jealousies, quarrels, recriminations, reconciliations—all are here in music. I can't give even a specimen of each. Here, however, are two which have unusual character. This is hers—

If you love me, I love you; if you hate me, I hate;
If you wish for my joy, so joy be your fate.
If you scorn, you are scorned; if another you crave,
Or another crave you, then another I'll have.
Seek me, I seek you; if you fly me, I run.
If you long for to have me, by you I'm undone.

And this also, curiously reasonable, for a little scope.

Let me go free and as I please,
Weep not, I'll never leave thee.
Had I a thousand loves they're thine,
Pastime should ne'er deceive thee.
Were I a ten score years away
My heart would hold thee fast;
Or thrice ten score years coming home,
I'd have thee in the last.

The serenata.

Last scene of courtship, the serenade. In this case the friends of the lover come with him, and sing for him; and they sing, not to the girl, but to her parents. Thus—

Here come we with our serenade
To give you pleasure and good night.
You have within a loving maid
Under your charge and in your sight.
And if perchance asleep she's laid,
We bid you wake her, 'tis her right.

Tell her her lover passed this way,
Whose true heart holds her night and day.
Tell her her servant went by here,
Whose good mind keeps her all the year.[1]

He sings, and she should listen—but she must not come out to him on any account. His delicacy is a beautiful thing—

Se dormi o se non dormi, viso adorno,
Alza la bionda e delicata testa.

This is an exquisite piece, which has proved too much for Mr. Symonds' muse (*loc. cit.* p. 288).

I continue the original—

Ascolta lo tuo amor che tu hai d' intorno,
Dice che tu ti affacci alla finestra.
Ma non ti dice che tu vada fuora,
Perché la notte è cosa disonesta:
Facciati alla finestra, e stanne in casa,
Perch' io sto fuora, e fo l' inserenata.

There can be little but beauty and honesty in the heart of a young man when love turns it to such uses as this.

Here he blesses the house he lives in, because it is beautified by her shadow as she passes—

Io benedisco la mano al maestro
Che m' ha fatto la casa in sulla via:
E la finestra me l' ha fatta bassa,
Per veder l' amor mio quando ci passa.

Wedlock or good-bye: there are no other courses. Here then is the happy day, and the bridegroom going to fetch home the bride. Here is the whole scene.— **The end.**

Quando sarà quel benedetto giorno
Che le tue scale salirò pian piano?

[1] "O curtained fair," she is addressed sometimes: "O bella che fra' cortinaggi stai!"

I tuoi fratelli me verranno intorno,
Ad uno ad un gli tocchero la mano.
Quando sarà quel dì, cara colonna,
Che la tua mamma chiamerò madonna?
Quando sarà quel dì, caro amor mio?
Io sarò vostra, e voi sarete mio!

But hear her cry when she sends him away—not because she will, but because she must. She begins with gentle dignity—

M' è stato detto che a' vostri non piace
Che ci veniate, caro signor mio.
Se non ci puoi venir, dattene pace—
Non stare in guerra più per amor mio.

But at the last she breaks out—

Amore, amore, amor! passa que' poggi!
Amore, amore, amor! .viemmi a vedere!
Viemmi a vedere innanzi ch' io mi muoia,
Innanzi che m' accendan le candele!

And then—the fount of love all seared and blistered—she sings no more, but weds her old Robin Gray, and becomes a withered hag before she is five-and-twenty. Let us leave her with our benediction for her sweet, singing youth.

Now, I consider that here I have brought you straight into the heart of Tuscany, and shall leave you, with that gate open, to walk the road alone. Dante in one of your pockets, Tigri's *Anthology* in the other, I hold you to be properly equipped. As for Dante, he can stand alone; but for the Professor's garner there is this to be added—that not one word in the whole budget is gross, or vulgar, or otherwise than delicate. Chivalry, assuredly, never made of fleshly love a more dainty ethereal business. Dante never rarefied his Beatrice, Petrarch his

Laura more utterly than Beppino his "bionda e delicata testa," than Nencina, the little barefoot girl, her "bel gelsomino." Nor, and it is a most notable thing, is there one pang of desire, one wail of distress, which may not be satisfied, and is not intended to find its satisfaction or its salve in wedlock. Neither Dante nor Petrarch could say as much—and they are none the greater poets for the inability.

The heart of Tuscany is as sweet and mellow as the heart of an apple; and so it has ever been.

VILLA CRAWFORD.

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